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The Washington Monthly

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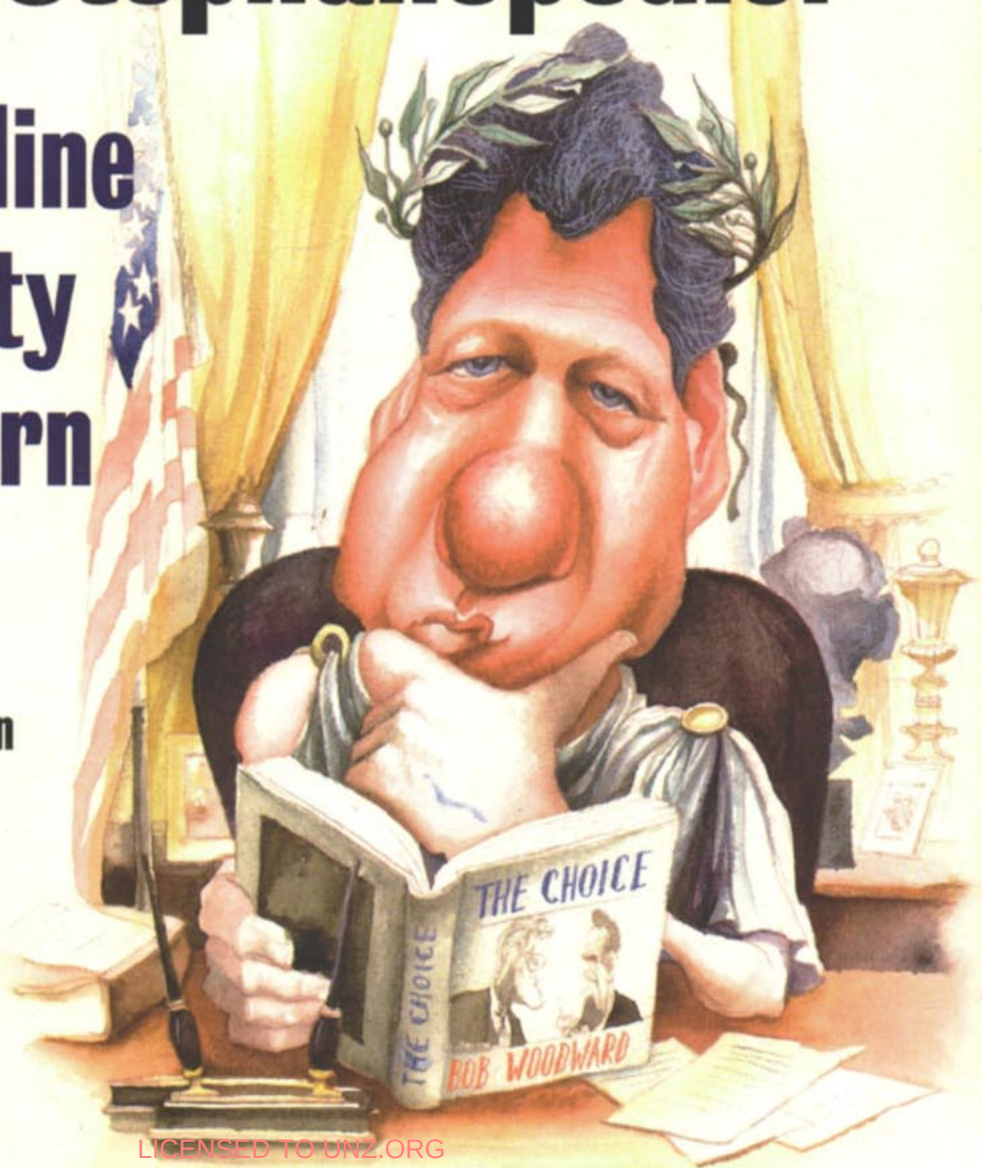
"Et tu, Stephanopoule?"

The decline of loyalty in modern politics

By Amy Waldman



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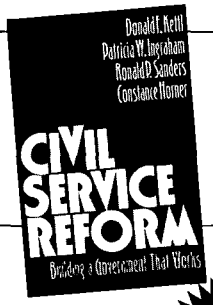

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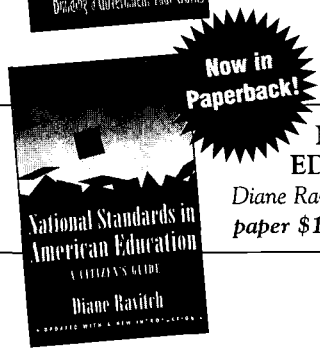

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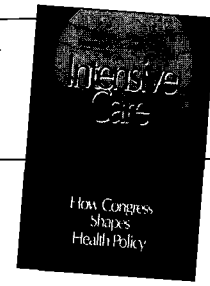

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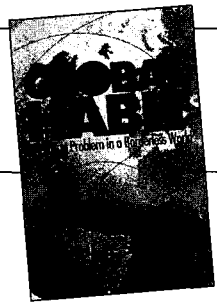

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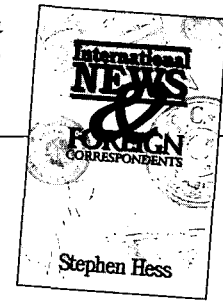

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The Washington Monthly

Volume 28, Number Nine September 1996

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Letters

Divine Journalism

"Star Struck" by Joshua Wolf Shenk (June) is generally on the money, but, to my mind, doesn't go far enough. First, the small stuff. Mr. Shenk gave me credit for exposing the true ownership of New York's Fashion Cafe. But as I point out in the updated paperback of *Model: The Ugly Business of Beautiful Women*, the praise properly goes to Frank DiGiacomo and Daniel Green of *The New York Observer*. Mr. Shenk also names *Rolling Stone* the first magazine to pair good writers with celebrity subjects. He must be too young to have read "The Duke in His Domain," a piece by Truman Capote on Marlon Brando, which ran in *The New Yorker* in 1956, or "Frank Sinatra Has a Cold," by Gay Talese, which ran in *Esquire* in 1966. I highly recommend them to him.

Finally, Shenk left out the exceptions that prove his rule. Some reporters do try to cover celebrities in unshackled and insightful ways, but their reward is blacklisting by Hollywood flacks, aided and abetted by new-breed "editors" who conspire with the people they cover by day (and not coincidentally dine with at night) to blow smoke up the skirts of readers. Recent events at *Premiere* are just the point of the pyramid.

Yes, some of the starry-eyed hagiographers Shenk wrings his hands over write like angels. But their trade isn't journalism. Chances are, Divine Brown does her job angelically, too.

Michael Gross
New York, NY

Phoney Polls

Larry J. Sabato and Glenn R. Simpson are on the money in arguing that push polling is an especially nefarious campaign weapon because it leaves so few "fingerprints" ("When Push Comes To Poll," June). But they pessimistically conclude that this ugly and deceptive technique is the "true communications stealth technology of the future." Better to make sure that fingerprints are left all over this weapon. Requiring full disclosure of all major expenditures for this purpose and making phone scripts available in advance on all major media buys would leave lots of juicy evidence for the folks in the local newsrooms. We should also require phone operators to identify any campaign funding at the beginning of a call.

Thomas O'Brien
Horizon Institute for Policy Solutions
Charlottesville, VA

Toeing the Line

While Charles Peters may believe that the line-item veto makes little difference based on West Virginia's governor's limited use ("Tilting at Windmills," June), it has been questionably employed by Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating almost 30 times in appropriations bills. Some may have been pork, but several smacked of political vendetta. He vetoed, among other things, merit pay for teachers, extra money for the (too-effective) state auditor, and funds for the Ethics Commission that oversees campaign financing. What the Governor *didn't* veto, incidentally, was the appropriation that provided him with a private plane.

There is a political consistency in almost every one of Keating's line-item vetoes—that of a right wing Republican governor weakening agencies that are controlled by elected Democrats.

Stuart Van Orden
Perkins, OK

Bloodletting

In her piece "The Real Blood Sport: The Whitewater Scandal Machine" (May), Amy Waldman recycles the baseless canard that "Citizens United head Floyd Brown and his right-hand man David Bossie ... brought David Hale to the public via the press." As it happened, the first stories in the national media about Hale's allegations against President Clinton appeared in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* on the same day, November 2, 1993. I interviewed Hale for the *Post* piece and can assure Ms. Waldman that I did not need—nor did I receive—any help from Bossie or Brown in locating him. Jeff Gerth, author of the *Times* article, can speak for himself, but any suggestion that he needed Citizens United's assistance to do his reporting is patently ridiculous. As for Ms. Waldman's broader point that Bossie and Brown have been "spoonfeeding the press" stories about Whitewater, I have no idea what she's talking about. She cites not a single article that fits this description, and I defy her to name one.

Much else in her article is flatly wrong. She credits *The Washington Times* with being the first to report independent counsel Ken Starr's "extensive private legal work" in September 1995. In fact, *Newsweek* (my current publication) reported in its June 12, 1995, edition that Starr was earning $1 million a year representing corporate clients for his law firm, Kirkland & Ellis, and had recent-

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ly signed on for the tobacco industry in the Castano class-action lawsuit in New Orleans. Waldman then chides *The Washington Post* for never reporting the "intriguing chain of events" involving Judge David Sentelle's lunch with Sen. Lauch Faircloth, followed by Sentelle's decision to replace the first independent counsel, Robert Fiske, with Starr. Actually, Howard Schneider of the *Post* broke the story of the Sentelle-Faircloth lunch in a front-page piece on August 12, 1994.
Michael Isikoff
Newsweek

Amy Waldman replies: Newsweek *did briefly discuss Kenneth Starr's moonlighting in its "Periscope" column in June 1995, but* The Washington Times *was the first publication to thoroughly document the list of Starr's clients and highlight them in a major story. And while* The Washington Post *did report the lunch between David Sentelle and Senator Lauch Faircloth, Mr. Isikoff apparently did not finish reading the "chain of events" I described: It concluded with Senator Faircloth giving a job to Judge Sentelle's wife, a fact the* Post *did not, and still has not, reported. As to the role Floyd Brown and David Bossie played in bringing David Hale to the public's attention and spoonfeeding the press, that is an achievement that Brown at least has frequently boasted of, to myself and numerous other published sources. The* Times *and the* Post *may have run the first Hale articles, but the story has been kept alive through Citizens United's concerted efforts. And if David Bossie's week-long stint guiding an NBC reporter through Arkansas—to name just one example—doesn't constitute spoonfeeding the press, I'm not sure what does.*

Smokescreen

I read with interest your story "Blowing Smoke Rings Around the Statehouses" (May) detailing an unidentified tobacco company lobbyist's attempts to prevent increases in state cigarette excise taxes. The story included a quote from a now well-circulated 1990 internal Phillip Morris memo in which the lobbyist "Smoking Gun" equated campaign contributions with "buying" politicians—including John Sharp. According to the story, the memo indicated that the "plan is to give early and large contributions to Sharp, thereby at the very least buying [his] silence when it comes to locating new revenues."

Wrong. It would have been easy for your reporter to update your readers on the success or failure of this effort. He would have learned that the tobacco lobby has contributed little to Sharp's campaigns. In Texas, tobacco companies are about as popular as fire ants. As a matter of fact, Texas has filed a $4 billion lawsuit against eight tobacco companies, including Phillip Morris, to reimburse taxpayers for the amount spent on tobacco-related illnesses over the past decade.

What's more, the Texas excise tax, which Smoking Gun seemed so worried about in 1990, was raised later that year to 41 cents a pack, a higher rate than all but a dozen states. So much for buying silence.

Face it, Smoking Gun was simply blowing smoke. It would have been useful to let your readers know that, rather than leave them with the impression that John Sharp or anyone else had been bought off.
Ross Ramsey
Executive Assistant
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

Morton Mintz replies: The idea of the piece was more to show what Phillip Morris intended—as shown by Smoking Gun's memos—than to track down every outcome. Nonetheless, the criticism is fair.

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Tilting at Windmills

Having recently crossed the Atlantic in the tourist class section of a jam-packed jet and subsequently suffered the twisted-sheets torment of jet lag, I am ready to relaunch my campaign to bring back the zeppelin. These giant airships got you there in uncrowded comfort. You could walk around, go to the bar or dining room, sleep in a bed in your cabin. You got there in about 24 hours, which, if you combine the travel time of a jet and the time lost in the fog of jet lag, is less than is involved when you travel by plane today....

A *Washington Post* editorial approved a recent Supreme Court decision in favor of alcohol advertising on the grounds that the court "is moving in the general direction of expanding First Amendment protection of commercial speech that—importantly—is neither false nor misleading." It seems to me that every ad the *Post* or its magazine, *Newsweek*, publishes that suggests that drinking and smoking are cute or glamorous is misleading—and cruelly and dangerously so....

Have you heard those commercials for a home-study aid called "Verbal Advantage"? They remind me of the ads for a book called "Thirty Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary" that I purchased while I was in high school. The trouble was that it had a plethora of words like plethora that were less than easy to find a natural occasion to use, but which I resolutely tried to insert into conversations and papers for school, to what I'm sure was the amusement of my friends and teachers....

The good news is that Keith Geiger, who is retiring as president of the National Education Association, had the courage to tell union members in his farewell address: "No one is served when it takes several years and hundreds of thousands of dollars to get rid of a single incompetent employee." The bad news is that his remarks elicited only scattered applause from the audience of teachers, and there was total silence when he asked, "Why are we hung up on that word 'tenure'?"...

Like practically everyone else, I have been aware of a trend in the practice of psychiatry toward increasing reliance on pills. But I had no idea how far things had gone until I read this anecdote, recounted by Keith Ablow, a Boston psychiatrist, in *The Washington Post*:

"Several months ago, while doing rounds in a private hospital, I asked a depressed middle-aged woman who had recently tried to kill herself which psychiatrist was in charge of her treatment.

"'I don't know,' she responded.

"I ticked off a list of hospital psychiatrists, hoping she would recognize a name.

"Midway through, she stopped me. 'Oh yes,' she said. 'I think that's his name. I've met him twice but only for 10 minutes each time.'"

Ablow goes on to say that it has become common for patients to spend less than an hour with their psychiatrists during a week of hospitalization, even at prestigious institutions. "Many will leave the hospital without their psychiatrist knowing much more about them than their names, symptoms, diagnoses, and medications."

This change has been brought about in part by improvements in medications and a better understanding of how to use them. But the most compelling factor in the change has been, according to Ablow, "the growth of health maintenance and other managed care organizations which sharply cut reimbursement for all kinds of psychiatric service."

Anyone who has a friend whose wealth or generous health insurance plan seemed to inspire his or her therapist to stretch out treatment for what seems an eternity knows that there's often too much money invested in psychiatric care. But as in so many other areas of medicine today, HMOs seem to be pushing a little too hard to lower their expenses at the risk of inadequate treatment for the patient....

Did you know that any Postal Service unionized employee who is dissatisfied with his wages, hours, or other aspect of his job can file a grievance? The filing initiates a complicated and time-consuming 14-step process. In 1993, 51,800 grievances were filed. Last year, the number was 73,300. No wonder your mail isn't delivered on time....

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Members of the Hennepin County Bar Association in Minnesota were recently awarded Continuing Legal Education credit for attending a seminar entitled "Business Golf: What's the Big Deal?" which included such topics as "Golf Networking" and "How Business Golf Can Further Marketing Aims."...

According to a recent article by Knight-Ridder's Elinor Brecher, many women are required to wear panty hose to work in the summer. My wife tells me that these garments are especially uncomfortable in warm weather. I believe her because I remember 40 years ago trying out a nylon shirt on a hot, humid day. It was incredibly clammy. I changed into a cotton shirt after a few hours and never wore any other kind again. Why shouldn't women go barelegged or wear cotton slacks on summer days?...

There is a scandalous absence of editing at most American newspapers, even at the best of the bunch, *The New York Times*. Take a recent article headed "Italians Sue the Barnes Because Show Didn't Go to Rome." The city of Rome alleged that Richard Glanton, the president of the Barnes Foundation, had reneged on a promise to put the city on the European schedule for its exhibition "Great French Paintings From the Barnes Foundation."

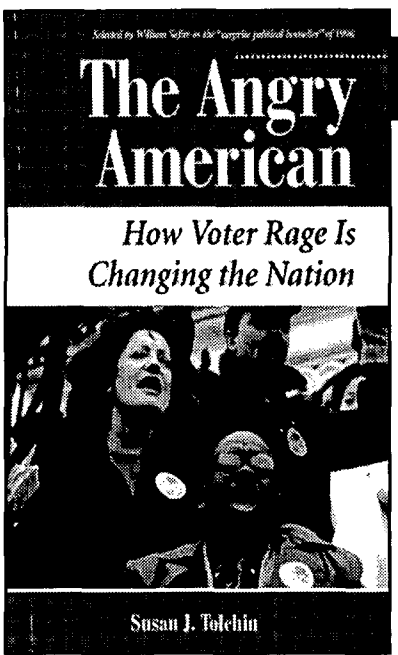
In one paragraph, the story goes: "The lawsuit also accuses Mr. Glanton of using his position as president of the Barnes during the negotiations to gain business for his Philadelphia law firm."

And in another paragraph, the story says:

"'I did what was best for the foundation,' Mr. Glanton said. He acknowledged that he sought business for his firm but denied doing so in his capacity as the Barnes president, a position for which he receives no pay."

That's all there is on this intriguing subject. Didn't any of the editors know that one of the major motives for lawyers to serve on boards is in the hope of getting legal business for their firms? Did the editors ask the writer to find out what kind of business and from whom? Did the facts suggest that Glanton might have made the law business a quid pro quo for the exhibition? The answers to these questions would have made for a much more interesting story. Yet it appears they were not asked. Certainly they are not answered in the story, even though it goes on for 17 paragraphs.

This is further evidence of what I have been told for years by the alumni of this magazine who have gone on to work for the nation's



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"Explores with insight the psychic underpinnings of American politics, the anger and discontent that are shaping the outcome of elections from Topeka to Tupelo. This book continues what has become a Tolchin tradition of tackling the most troubling and difficult issues facing the United States." **Thomas Byrne Edsall,** *The Washington Post*

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most prominent newspapers. They are amazed by the lack of questioning by their editors, the lack of argument, and the lack of the kind of intellectual challenge that would test their assumptions and reveal the weaknesses in their stories....

I am one of the many admirers of Joe Klein's reporting. And I think *Primary Colors*, until it degenerates into melodrama at the end, is a marvelous read. But I'm also one of the many who feel Joe Klein was dead wrong to lie and that Maynard Parker was dead wrong to go along with the lie.

What I find most unforgivable of all Klein's falsehoods was his calling Donald Foster "the wrong expert" after the Vassar professor had analyzed Klein's prose for *New York* magazine and correctly identified him as Anonymous. This attack on Foster's professional competence is what the law calls libel per se. The professor should consult an attorney. He may well be entitled to a substantial chunk of Klein's $6 million take.

I don't want Joe to be fired—I enjoy his reporting too much for that—but I do think the gains he got by lying should be shared with the man he lied about....

Recently I was talking to a top aide at one of Washington's regulatory commissions. He made a point that I thought was worth pondering:

The commissioner who enthusiastically sides with the regulated industry is sure to have a constituency to defend him when he's in trouble, advocate his reappointment, and provide him with a nice job in the private sector if he's not reappointed.

By contrast, the commissioner who sides with the public interest instead of the private can't be sure anyone will come to his rescue. It all depends on how well the media reports the work of his commission. Since such reporting usually ranges from mediocre to nonexistent, the commissioner who acts in the public interest cannot be confident that his virtue will be rewarded. The result is that commissioners who are not saints tend to vote in favor of the regulated industry....

Roman Genn

Once, when Anthony Marceca, Craig Livingstone's associate at the White House, was working with the Army's Criminal Investigation Division on surveillance missions in Arizona, he was advised to keep a low profile. So, as one colleague told *The Washington Post*, he drove around "with his head so low it could barely be seen."...

This magazine has bemoaned the generational inequity of well-to-do seniors cruising the Caribbean with Social Security financed by payroll taxes on struggling young workers. There are, of course, many other special benefits afforded the elderly, including discounts at movie theaters, hotels, restaurants, drug stores, and a host of other retailers that are not available to young people. Recently, a Washington couple, William and Judith Diehl, were standing in line at a movie theater behind an obviously unaffluent young couple with three children who were dressed in clothes that were definitely not spiffy. The poor couple and their children had to pay regular prices. When the Diehls got generous discounts on their tickets, they began to think about what they could do. They couldn't change the world, but they could do something. They decided, according to Laura Sessions Stepp of *The Washington Post*, to keep track of how much money they saved from all those seniors' discounts they get and donate the total amount to children's charities. I like their spirit and hope more of my fellow geezers will show similar generosity....

In 1945, the Marine Corps consisted of 485,113 men and women, of whom 72 were generals. Today, according to John McCaslin of *The Washington Times*, the total force is down to 172,434, but there are only four fewer generals....

G. David Schine died the other day. For those of you who are too young to remember, he, as a young man in the 1950s, was associated with Joseph McCarthy and participated in some of the more ludicrous Red-hunting misadventures of the senator from Wisconsin. But he was also the victim of a slander that was a featured topic of the liberal rumor mill of that era. He and Roy Cohn, another McCarthy staffer, were described as homosexuals—which, because of the prevailing attitudes of the time, was definitely not intended to be flattering, even by liberals who should have known better. Later on, it turned out that Roy Cohn really

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was gay. But when Schine died last week, his obituary revealed that he had married in 1957 and thereafter had fathered six children. I say "revealed" because I definitely do not recall those inconvenient facts having been mentioned in the liberal rumors....

One day last spring a dozen people came to the office of Kay Holembe, an assistant to Rep. John Dingell, to urge her to enlist her boss in an effort to reform the Food and Drug Administration. She was touched by the stories they told of the health problems they and their relatives were enduring. Yet after checking into the stories she found that only one complaint was about something that was the FDA's fault. The rest were about diseases for which there was no cure or for health concerns, like the need for nursing home care, that were not within the FDA's jurisdiction. Why were they there? Well, for one thing, according to *The Washington Post*'s John Schwartz, their trip was paid for by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, which is pressing Congress to loosen up FDA procedures....

"The high actualizers I have known," writes Hillary Clinton's guru, Jean Houston, in *The Possible Human: A Course in Enhancing Your Physical, Mental and Creative Abilities*, "...have allowed their body-minds to become fields of space-time from which can be harvested the formings of the Form. Their will and intentionality have become macrophase and consonant with the primary order."...

Speaking of the First Lady, did you see Herblock's recent drawing of Eleanor Roosevelt? It shows her saying, "For one thing, dear, I had the advantage of not sounding like a lawyer—and, not that it's important, but I didn't change my hairstyle quite so often."...

Legalizing drugs, which this magazine has long advocated (see Joshua Wolf Shenk's "Why You Can Hate Drugs and Still Want To Legalize Them" in our October issue for the most recent statement of our position), is an idea that even politicians who agree find too hot to handle. The same seems to be true of doctors. The American Medical Association is suppressing a report that advocates the legalization of marijuana and the elimination of criminal penalties for the use of other drugs. The report, which was prepared for the association's Council on Scientific Affairs, was "shelved after objections were raised by prominent medical groups," according to *The New York Times*.

If we can't have general legalization, let's at least take the tiny

"This book is for every American who is worried about disappearing jobs,

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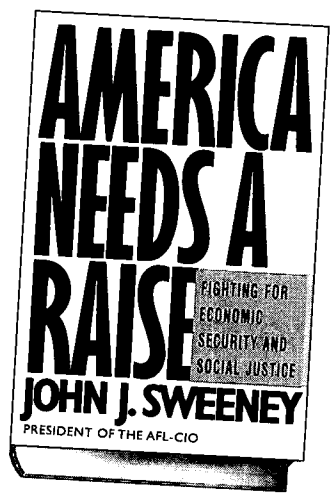
vanishing health care, plundered pension plans, and the sense that their work is no longer respected and rewarded."
—**JOHN J. SWEENEY, President of the AFL-CIO, in *America Needs a Raise***

"We look to John Sweeney... for a larger vision of American business...an insistence on a bottom line that puts first the lives of women, men, and children as well as the long term health and prosperity of the economy."—**BETTY FRIEDAN**

"John Sweeney—the new visionary leader of the labor movement—understands that economic insecurity is the ticking time-bomb of our society.... Read this and heed his words!"—**CORNEL WEST**



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but humane step of legalizing marijuana for medical uses for which its effectiveness at relieving symptoms has been proven. Patients suffering from AIDS, cancer, and glaucoma are among those who can be helped now by marijuana. The brave souls who give them marijuana, people like Brownie Mary—a 73-year-old San Franciscan who bakes marijuana cookies for AIDS patients—should not risk having their kindness land them in jail. In California, there will be a statewide referendum in November on the issue of legalizing the medical use of marijuana. If it passes, let's hope it emboldens a future, smarter Congress to do the same for the country as a whole....

Gambling is another activity that, like the use of marijuana and other drugs, we think should be legalized, but—and what an important "but" it is—should not be encouraged in any way, certainly not by advertising or state sponsorship.

Yet, as we keep on complaining, gambling in the form of lotteries is being advertised by state governments. They're trying to entice their citizens into losing what for many is hard-earned money by exaggerating the chances of winning and by presenting glowing pictures of the rewards a few lucky winners enjoy.

The latest bad news is that the gambling industry has succeeded in getting a major-league politician to front for it. He's Frank Fahrenkopf, Jr., who will head its Washington lobby. It may be better than being a tobacco lobbyist, Mr. Fahrenkopf, but only slightly....

Those who believe that regulation would be better done by state governments should ponder the case of the insurance industry, which for more than 40 years has been regulated by the states. The result, according to a recent article in *Money* magazine, hardly a mouthpiece for the radical left, is that "to a large extent the insurance industry writes the laws that govern it."...

We've been hearing a lot about raising the minimum wage. How about lowering the maximum wage? Currently the top executives of the 500 largest companies are making 197 times what the average worker is paid. Rep. Martin Sabo has proposed a bill that would prevent companies from deducting executive compensation that is more than 25 times the salary of the company's lowest paid worker. Sam Pizzigati, who wrote a book called *The Maximum Wage* in 1992, recently told Steven Greenhouse of *The New York Times*, "You'd have a very interesting situation because for the first time the richest and most powerful people would have a vested interest in raising the wages of the lowest paid."...

The bright and idealistic youths who have so far resisted all my arguments against embarking on legal careers should consider the following statement by Norman C. Alt in the Class of 1971 Reunion Directory of the University of Pennsylvania Law School:

"I went to law school to make a difference in urban affairs. Instead, I wound up protecting the interests of several large multinational companies.... I don't recommend law school to young people unless they understand they will be in the service of the rich and will have few opportunities for altruistic behavior."

Lawyers can behave altruistically, but not often if they want to make a lot of money at one of the big firms....

The scene was a classroom at Southern Connecticut State University. The thirty one students were public school teachers brushing up their skills during the summer vacation. The instructor asked them "how many had principals with passion." Half a dozen or so raised their hands, according to George Judson of *The New York Times*. Then the instructor asked "how many had principals who lacked passion." Half the class raised their hands.

This is a sad comment on the state of the public schools today. But it also suggests a marvelous career opportunity for all those bright young people out there who, because they can't think of anything else to do, go to law school. Why not prepare yourself to become a public school principal? Few other jobs offer such a chance to be in charge and to make a difference. The challenge is attracting good teachers, getting rid of the turkeys, dealing with the central administration, and firing up both students and teachers—not easy but worth doing and doing well....

—*Charles Peters*

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Why I'll Vote for Bill Clinton—and Why I Still Worry About Him

BY CHARLES PETERS

I will vote for Bill Clinton in November and hope you will too. Here are some questions that helped me decide. Who do you think will do more to protect the environment, Clinton or Dole? Who do you think will do more to help the poor, even though you fear neither will do enough? Who will do more to keep the tobacco companies from addicting another generation of Americans? Who will do more to bring about the racial reconciliation we so desperately need?

Do you believe that Bob Dole, with his irresponsible tax cut proposals, can improve on Bill Clinton's economic record of steady growth combined with deficit reduction? Does anyone really think that Bob Dole would have cared enough about enacting universal health care to put the enormous effort behind it that Bill Clinton did? To be sure, Clinton could have handled it better, but he did care enough to try, and in the process put his presidency at extreme risk.

Clinton himself may have put it most clearly when on the eve of the last election, he asked how many of today's Republican leaders you can imagine saying, "with malice toward none and charity for all." His critics are right in saying that Bill Clinton is not FDR or JFK. But he has a potential for greatness that just isn't there with Bob Dole.

All this seems quite clear to me. I have no doubts about voting for Bill Clinton. But I do have some concerns about him and his administration that continue to bother me. I'll write about these worries at some length because I think Bill Clinton will be re-elected and hope that he'll do something about them in his second term.

First, the people the President (and his powerful wife) appoint and consult. Why did Bill and Hillary Clinton, two graduates of Yale Law School who had devoted much of the 20 years that followed to zealous networking, fail to identify one person who would be a good attorney general? In this and some other cabinet choices, they appear to have been motivated by the idea of affirmative action, which they have only succeeded in giving a black eye. Why was their appraisal of character and talent so deficient that they made so many mistaken appointments, ranging from Hazel O'Leary to Federico ("ValuJet is safe") Pena to Craig Livingstone? Why do they turn to fashionable gurus like Stephen Covey and Jean Houston instead of trusted old friends? Why have Clinton and Gore, with all their emphasis on reinventing government, made no effort to attract talented young people to the civil service? No president since John Kennedy has made a major effort to inspire the best of our youth to go into government. The result is that many agencies desperately need fresh blood. Slimming down government isn't going to make it better unless we also have more committed and talented people working in it.

Second, why has Clinton failed to use his remarkable ability as a communicator to make more presidential addresses and hold more press conferences to explain the great issues to the American public? If he had first educated people on health care, helping them to understand both the problems of the health care industry and the pros and

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cons of possible solutions, instead of asking them to accept a Rube Goldberg plan on faith, my guess is that we could have had national health care today. At least we would have a public that understands the problem and what needs to be done. Most of today's important issues are, like health care, quite complicated. Entitlements are another example. They need explanation and a lot of it. If the president had explained the complexities of welfare reform, I believe we would have had a much less flawed bill than the one he signed. I know Clinton is often accused of talking too much; but on the big issues, I would argue that his problem is just the opposite.

"Thank God the Russians aren't coming."

My last and greatest concern is Clinton's administrative incuriosity. Clinton has been remarkably indifferent to what the people under him are doing or not doing. The only exceptions are when they are involved with matters that are on his agenda or in the news. Then he and his top aides come to full attention. But ordinarily they know little, as Joseph Biden recently discovered.

The time was a Friday in late June. The place was a Senate hearing on the FBI files scandal. The senator from Delaware had just learned that not only did Craig Livingstone and Anthony Marceca not have an accurate list of people with access to the White House, neither did the FBI, the Secret Service, nor anyone else on the White House staff. "This Administration...," concluded Biden, "seems not to know what they were doing.... 'Thank God the Russians aren't coming.'"

The senator exaggerates—but not by much. If a White House subordinate or an agency head is not involved in an item in the news or on the presidential agenda, the only way he can attract attention from the top of the White House is by writing a memo to the president or asking for an appointment, or by putting out a press release or leaking a story. One or more of these he will probably do if he has good news.

If, however, the news is bad, the underling may succumb to a temptation that has been irresistible for so many bureaucrats over the years, which is to keep the lid on in the hopes that he can fix the problem so that it won't be discovered by the president or the press. Bad news simply does not have upward mobility in the federal bureaucracy. And in an election year the White House will often actually encourage suppression of the bad news by sending out signals that those down below interpret to mean that the lid should be kept on any problem that could rock the boat in such a way that victory at the polls might be jeopardized.

But the normal bureaucratic tendency to soft-pedal the unpleasant is so strong that it seldom requires overt encouragement from above. Employees who reveal bad news to the press usually find themselves in hot water. Just this summer FAA officials threatened to punish agency workers who, shortly before the Olympics, gave Ruth Larson of *The Washington Times* figures that demonstrated the Atlanta air traffic control center's poor record of keeping flights separated. Not exactly an earthshaking revelation, but this still was enough to prompt the threat of punishment. And since most civil servants don't want to be punished, their instinct for self-preservation generally inhibits their desire to inform the public or the president of what may be regarded as unhappy tidings.

Too often bad news, whether it concerns an airline's failure to inspect cargo for hazardous materials or a military barracks being located too close to a street in Saudi Arabia, does not make its way to the top until a disaster has occurred.

This means the president and his top aides need to make a special effort to find out what's going on, especially if what's going on may be bad. This doesn't mean micromanaging à la Jimmy Carter; it does mean having a good information system so you can hold accountable the people to whom you delegate responsibility. But the White House lacks any systematic way of keeping track of what's happening down below. One senior White House aide told me that neither he nor his colleagues even read the General Accounting Office's reports.

But even the GAO doesn't attempt full reports on what individual agencies are doing, and the president can't count on the press to tell him because it rarely attempts such reporting. The rare exceptions suggest that a lot of the news from below is not comforting. When *The Wall Street Journal*'s Timothy Noah took a good look at what was going on at the Department of Energy, he found that the real scandal was not in the Hazel O'Leary junkets the rest of the press was report-

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ing, but in the way subordinates were wasting their time.

Forty lawyers were spending their days pursuing oil companies that violated federal price regulations that expired 13 years ago. Many other employees were engaged in activities that seemed even less important. The Energy Department has an Office of Quality Management that trains "customer focus advocates," "customer focus coordinators," and "habit facilitators." The DOE also has two dozen field quality coordinators at its offices and labs around the country. How, asked Noah, do they spend their time? The Las Vegas coordinator replied that on a typical day he will "review any plan that we might be working on with regard to quality. That might include a customer focus plan. It might also include plans to get our strategic planning going. It might include plans or obligations I have to the Quality Council."

What Bill Clinton must learn is that bureaucrats have a natural tendency to involve themselves in make-work —"plans to get our strategic planning going"—because it doesn't get them in trouble, as, say, trying to get tough on energy conservation might do. To get the work force focused on real work that can make a difference, the president has to encourage his subordinates to figure out what should be their mission and how best to carry it out. That happened early on at the Federal Emergency Management Agency under Clinton appointee James Lee Witt. The results were laudable. It is finally happening at the FAA—the agency has at last decided to focus on safety.

But it hasn't happened in much of the rest of government, even though more than a year ago Al Gore announced that agency missions would be the next priority of his reinventing government task force. One reason it's not happening is that this is an election year. Figuring out your mission and then carrying it out is going to upset everyone threatened by that mission, which sometimes includes powerful individuals and voting blocs the president would not want to offend. But if Bill Clinton wants to attain greatness as a president he must make "mission" his mission next year.

Determining what the various agencies under him should be doing is only half the battle. The other half is finding out whether they're actually implementing the mission effectively. This takes us back to the need to increase the President's knowledge of what the people under him are doing. In this respect, one sentence of a July item in *Newsweek*'s Periscope section suggests that the President might be looking in the wrong direction. It says that Leon Panetta has directed a trusted aide, Jodie Torkelson, to "vet staffers ... who have access to sensitive personnel files." This is the usual White House response: Try to shut the specific barn door from which the horse fled without dealing with the broader problem of White House ignorance. But another sentence in the Periscope item is more hopeful. Torkelson was also directed to see if the Office of Management and Budget might be used by the White House to find out "what's going on" down below.

This is the right agency to act as the president's eyes and ears. But as we have tried to point out, its staff is far too small to keep track of what the vast federal establishment is up to. It needs to be doubled (Clinton must face the fact that some agencies need to be upsized). Even then, it won't be able to find out everything that's going on in the government, but it will be able to find out enough to keep everyone in the government on their toes, in much the same way an IRS audit of our friends and business associates encourages the rest of us to file honest returns.

To achieve its highest possible effectiveness, the OMB also needs to teach its employees the techniques of interview and observation employed by journalists like Timothy Noah, so that they can see what lies behind the numbers. If an FAA inspector, for example, says he did 332 inspections, *what* did he inspect? Such reporting methods would have enabled the OMB, to take one recent example, to alert the White House to the dangers involved in the FAA's method of allowing airlines to give responsibility for identifying hazardous cargoes and luggage to freight forwarding and security companies whose performance was unsupervised by the airlines. Awareness of these practices at the White House—or even the FAA's awareness that the White House might become aware of them —might have led to tougher scrutiny that might have prevented both the ValuJet and the TWA crashes.

In other words, the President's administrative incuriosity is not merely some abstract failure only of interest to students of political science. It can keep this government from doing what it is supposed to do to protect and serve its citizens. It can even cost lives. □

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May the Force Be With You

Because the Republicans' costly missile defense system probably won't be

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

On a bright day this June in Sunnyvale, Calif., Republican presidential aspirant Bob Dole explained the nature of the dark storm cloud threatening America's national security: "[A] rogues' gallery of terrorist and aggressive anti-American regimes, I believe, in effect are being encouraged by the administration's attitude, and they are developing or acquiring nuclear and missile technology.... Mr. Clinton's opposition to a missile defense is one of the most negligent, short-sighted, irresponsible, and potentially catastrophic policies in history."

Okay, so this isn't the first time a Republican has accused a Democrat of being weak on defense. And ballistic missiles certainly lend themselves to alarming rhetoric. Newt Gingrich displayed this most eloquently at a Stanford symposium last year, when he denounced the Clinton administration's missile defense policy: "The world is dangerous.... Some people are willing to let you die or let you be totally blackmailed. Which team do you want to be on?"

Last March, Dole and Gingrich pushed missile defense even further into the spotlight when they introduced the Defend America Act of 1996. An updated version of Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, Defend America mandates the deployment of a national missile defense system by 2003. The "highly effective" system—priced somewhere between $31 and $60 billion—would include radar, interceptor missiles, and satellite tracking systems.

The conservative media followed the GOP's lead. *New York Times* columnist William Safire said the issue "defines the two parties," and a *Wall Street Journal* roundtable called missile defense "one of the defining issues between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole."

There's only one problem: When the defining issue is defined, the candidates' differences are about as substantive as an episode of "Seinfeld." The Clinton folks want their missile defense system, too, and the president is quick to tell the public how much he's already spending to get it ($3 billion in FY 1996 alone). Unable to upstage the president on this call to arms, Dole has abandoned the issue as a campaign centerpiece, and the Defend America Act has been temporarily tabled.

The "three-plus-three" strategy supported by President Clinton promises a "test-ready" ballistic missile defense system by 1999. At that point, if—and only if—the system is deemed necessary, the three-year de-

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ployment phase would begin. Emphasizing that "three-plus-three" could have a system in place within the same time frame as the Defend America Act, Clinton is trumpeting his program as the rational alternative. In an address last May at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Clinton criticized the Dole-Gingrich plan for requiring an immediate commitment to deployment by 2003. Such a plan, he said, "would force us to choose now a costly missile defense system that could be obsolete tomorrow."

Responding to Clinton's criticism, GOP leaders in the House drafted a letter strongly accusing the President of downplaying the threat of missile attack. "We strongly encourage you in the future to be absolutely candid with the American people on this vital security issue," they wrote.

Candid with the American public? Fine. Perhaps the discussion should begin with a look at the less-than-illustrious history and current status of the missile defense programs everyone is so eager to bring to the American people.

Insanity Defense

The precursor to ballistic missile defense, the Army's Nike antiaircraft system, emerged during the late 1950s. This system was eventually abandoned as incapable of intercepting any type of air threat. But missile defense development continued through the '60s and '70s. Finally, the Ford administration established the first U.S. anti-ballistic missile system at Grand Forks, N.D. It was maintained for six months, then shut down as cost-ineffective.

In 1983, the granddaddy of all missile defense plans emerged: Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars"), which sought to establish a space-based laser defense that would, in theory, erect an impenetrable "peace shield" around the United States. Since the plan's introduction, the United States has spent close to $40 billion trying to bring some variation of SDI to fruition. The fact that, after 13 years, the Pentagon does not have so much as one laser interceptor to show for its efforts hasn't dampened enthusiasm for what has been updated (it's now all about interceptor rockets) and renamed National Missile Defense.

But NMD accounts for only a fraction of total ballistic missile defense expenditures. Since 1994, the bulk of funding has gone toward Theater Missile Defense. TMD's purpose is to defend relatively small areas from short- and intermediate-range missiles—perfect for use in regional skirmishes. The main selling point of TMD is its apparent effectiveness. Much of America witnessed short-range theater defense at work thanks to CNN's Gulf War coverage. The footage of U.S. Patriot interceptors exploding in the night sky over Baghdad seemed a vindication of the $100 billion spent on missile defense over the last 30 years. Supplementing the visual display were initial reports of the Patriot's overwhelming "kill rates."

The Patriot's apparent success put missile defense boosters on the offensive; many former Star Warriors now insist that America's failure to develop an effective program stems from a lack of will rather than ability. Henry F. Cooper, director of the SDI program during the Bush administration, told *The Wall Street Journal* in June, "Defending against [ballistic missile attack] has been possible for years, but the necessary political will has been missing." In an interview last May with *The Christian Science Monitor*, Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) was even more direct: "We have a clear threat to our security that we have the technology to defend against but, so far, not the will."

But the Gulf War displayed all too clearly that the United States does *not* have the technology. At the April 7, 1992, oversight hearings on the Patriot's Gulf War performance, an analyst from the Congressional Research Service revealed that, based on the CRS's evaluation of Army methodology and analysis, it was possible that the 158 Patriots launched had succeeded in downing a grand total of one Iraqi Scud missile. And an independent study by MIT researchers Ted Postol and George Lewis concluded that the Patriot had almost certainly failed to destroy any at all.

But what about all those lovely explosions on CNN? Well, because the Patriot isn't an explode-on-impact missile, it puts on the light shows whether or not it destroys a target. What's more, at least 45 percent of the Patriots used in the Gulf War were launched against debris or false targets.

These figures are a far cry from Army estimates, which first placed the Patriot's kill rate at nearly 100 percent, then around 52 percent, with a "high confidence" of 25 percent. Par for the course, the Army's evaluation team included several representatives from the Raytheon Corp., the primary defense contractor of the Patriot systems. For its role in analyzing the Patriot's performance, Raytheon received more than $520,000.

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Even more perplexing are the adamant assertions that the United States has surmounted the technological barriers to missile defense. "The single biggest myth in this debate is that the technology exists," says Joseph Cirincione, chair of the Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers. "The Defend America Act explicitly states that the Congress finds that the technology exists for missile defense. Wrong. If we had it, we'd deploy. Everything that's been conceived of has been tried and has fallen short."

Far from being discouraged by the shortcomings of lower-tier systems like the Patriot, the race is on to develop an upper-tier, or "theater-wide," system for defending larger areas from intermediate-range missiles (up to 3,500 kilometers). The Army's Theater High Altitude Area Defense has received the most attention (and money) thus far. To date, THAAD has flown two trials in which it attempted to intercept an incoming target. It failed both. Similarly, the Navy's Theater Wide system has failed its two intercept attempts.

"Forget North Korea. We're talking about big issues here, like promotions ... and employment opportunities," says one expert.

Compounding the problem, all of these systems are designed to deal with missiles carrying a single warhead. As a countermeasure, incoming missiles could easily be equipped either with multiple decoys or with submunitions (bomblets that disperse soon after launch). While not feasible for nuclear warheads, submunitions are ideal for chemical or biological agents because they provide for greater dispersal. (The chemical warheads developed by the United States consist of hundreds of bomblets.)

Armed and Dangerous

What exactly are the global dangers driving our dubious search for a viable missile defense system? An accidental or unauthorized launch by a politically unstable Russia is frequently mentioned, as is a limited assault by China. But, without question, the current poster child for ballistic missile defense is the dreaded "rogue state."

At present, there are five nations—Syria, Libya, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea—that are hostile toward the United States and could conceivably pose a ballistic missile threat in the future. Currently, these states possess only weapons with an outside range of 600 kilometers (350 miles)—well below the 5,000 to 10,000 kilometer mark they would need to reach the United States. Nor does a significant threat loom on the horizon. Military intelligence estimates that none of the five nations will have the ability to threaten the continental United States for the next 15 years. (North Korea is reportedly in the early stages of developing an intermediate-range missile that could potentially reach western Hawaii and Alaska. The CIA estimates the outside range of the weapon to be around 5,500 kilometers with a warhead of a few hundred kilograms—far too light for a nuclear device.) Furthermore, were any of these states to embark on a long-range-missile program, its actions would quickly become evident, since the flight testing necessary for such development is visible to satellites.

Many people dismiss the 15-year estimate, asserting that technology or equipment purchased from another nation could drastically compress this time frame. But all six nations that currently possess ICBMs are committed to international nonproliferation, and all belong to the Missile Technology Control Regime. (Yes, even China.) Founded in 1987, the 28-member organization tightly controls the transfer of all ballistic missile systems and prohibits the transfer of production capabilities for ICBMs. Though a voluntary organization, the MTCR has proven extremely effective. The United States is the only country ever to have sold an ICBM to another nation (we once sold Polaris and Trident II missiles to Britain).

The threat of economic sanctions also serves as a strong deterrent to both potential buyers and sellers. This is particularly important in the case of China, which has in the past made noises about the benefits of nuclear proliferation, and the former Soviet states, which are in desperate need of cash. The sale of an ICBM to a rogue nation or terrorist group would result in international censure far outweighing any immediate financial gains. And while it's frequently suggested that rogue states are not as clear-headed about deterrence as the average superpower, it bears mentioning that Iraq did not deploy any of its chemical or biological warheads during the Gulf War, ostensibly out of fear of U.S. and Israeli retaliation. A covert ICBM sale is even less

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feasible. Transferring an ICBM is about as discreet a process as developing one. The missiles are more than large enough to be tracked by satellite.

As for concerns that a terrorist group will obtain weapons of mass destruction, it's important to recognize that ballistic missiles are the least reliable and most expensive method of delivering a nuclear, chemical, or biological assault. Far more likely would be an attack via boat, civilian airplane, or truck bomb (no massive capital investment; no early warning test flights; no obvious target for retaliation). Oklahoma City, the U.S. barracks in Saudi Arabia, the Atlanta Olympic games—every newscast drives home how many cheaper, easier alternatives are available to a determined terrorist.

Still, many argue that, if the slightest possibility exists that Hawaii or Alaska could be threatened by North Korea, or China could even conceivably hold San Francisco hostage, we should spend what it takes to develop a missile defense. After all, how can you put a price tag on American lives?

These arguments sound compelling, and they make for unbeatable election-year rhetoric. The problem is that an aggressive missile defense program may prove not only costly and ineffective, but also dangerous. For the last quarter century, the United States and Russia have adhered to strict guidelines set forth in the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972. On the assumption that a nation that felt safe from retaliation would be more inclined to launch a first strike, the ABM Treaty prohibits missile defense systems that could undermine the opposition's retaliatory capabilities. ABM guidelines thus allow Russia and the United States to reduce their nuclear arsenals, yet remain confident in their counterstrike ability. Under the auspices of ABM, the two nations have cooperated on arms reduction efforts such as the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and START I, resulting in the destruction of hundreds of warheads. Another 60 to 70 percent reduction in Russia's arsenal is expected once START II is ratified.

The establishment of a missile defense would be in clear violation of the ABM Treaty. Russia's likely reaction would be to halt arms reduction efforts and undo the 1994 U.S.–Russia agreement to "detarget" one another. Russian officials have repeatedly linked ratification of START II with ABM adherence. China, too, would likely expand its nuclear program if U.S. missile defense plans threatened to render its small arsenal obsolete.

Going Ballistic

What all the strong missile defense rhetoric obscures is the fact that we are not faced with a choice between erecting a missile defense system and doing nothing at all. We currently have several programs working to protect the United States from nuclear attack. But they have more to do with dismantling weapons systems than building them.

Any effort to strengthen U.S. security must focus on reducing the size and increasing the security of existing nuclear arsenals. As the former Soviet Union's military infrastructure deteriorates, the chances increase that a systems malfunction will cause an accidental launch, or that a renegade officer will launch without authorization. Programs such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and START I reduce this risk by slashing nuclear stockpiles in the former Soviet states and putting the remaining warheads under Russian command.

Efforts to aid in the disposal of fissile material and chemical and biological weapons are also under way. Two major U.S.–Russian programs are the Department of Energy's "Lab-to-Lab," which aims to tighten the security of research facilities, and the Cooperative Threat Reduction plan sponsored by Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar. Nunn-Lugar provides broad-based assistance, ranging from the disassembling of weapons systems to the conversion of manufacturing facilities for civilian use. Also important are the site inspections conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Proposals for future risk reduction efforts include easing the alert level of remaining missiles. Russian ICBMs are currently on a high alert, ready to launch at the first hint of a strike (which could include a false hint such as a solar storm). To ease this quick-draw situation, warheads could be removed and stored separately. This "zero alert" environment would require periodic monitoring and could be maintained only through the cooperation of all of the declared nuclear nations.

Until recently, such cooperative efforts were attacked as wasteful foreign aid by Republicans, who preferred that funding go toward missile defense systems. Now these conflicts are being circumvented by increasing the defense budget. "But you can't keep playing that game," says Cirincione. "The economic imperatives eventually catch up with you." When the time comes again for tough choices, history suggests that missile defense programs

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won't be the victims of downsizing.

With all the problems plaguing ballistic missile defense, what about it continues to enthrall military strategists and politicians? A purely cynical response would be: money. Defense contractors have deep pockets and generous donation habits. In the first six months of 1995, four members of the House National Security Appropriations Subcommittee got more than $10,000 apiece from PACs associated with missile defense contractors (as did Newt Gingrich, who, you will recall, is a cosponsor of the Defend America Act). In all, the top missile contractors' PACs gave $832,450 to House members in the first half of 1995.

No less intense is the military's financial stake in the debate. Much criticism has been leveled at the redundancy of separate Army, Navy, and Air Force programs. But with no Cold War, the armed services are facing major budget cuts, and no one wants to relinquish a piece of a pie as rich and glamorous as missile defense. "This debate is being driven largely by interservice bureaucratic rivalries, institutional self-images, and personal career trajectories," says John Pike, director of the Federation of American Scientists' Space Policy Project. "Forget North Korea. We're talking about big issues here, like promotions and funding share and employment opportunities."

To its credit, the military maintains a sharp distinction between its quest for effective theater missile defense and the national defense systems politicians are clamoring for. The Pentagon openly opposed the Defend America Act, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has warned Congress against jeopardizing arms reductions with violations of the ABM Treaty. But, in apparent concern that the professional military's judgment has been clouded by partisanship, the congressional true believers are taking charge. House Republicans have vowed to make Defend America more cost-attractive, and the Senate has plans to revisit the various missile defense proposals later this year.

For now, both national and theater ballistic missile defense have again dropped from the headlines. But, as always, the programs have far from disappeared. The Clinton administration plans to spend $16.5 billion on research and development over the next five years. With that kind of support, military scientists can afford to toil away in peaceful anonymity—until the next time some politician decides to dust off the issue and try it on for size. □

The Washington Monthly

JOURNALISM AWARD

MAY 1996

Malcolm Gladwell
The Washington Post

Most welfare reform articles are couched in tales of political turf wars and budget rhetoric. Gladwell's story makes a rare attempt to show how the nexus of state, local, and federal benefits translates in welfare recipients' lives, and how uncoordinated cuts at all three levels are leaving gaping holes in the social safety net.

JUNE 1996

Reed Abelson
The New York Times

Steal big and wear a necktie, it's been said, and your chances of avoiding jail improve immeasurably. Abelson provides the latest example: Companies that scorn inflated resumes or petty theft turn a blind eye to manipulation of their own financial bill of health, whether through outright accounting tricks or one-time "restructuring" charges, to mislead investors.

Peter Jennings
ABC News Special

Jennings's documentary provides new ammunition for anti-tobacco forces. He interviews RJ Reynolds salespeople who claim the company wanted them to court retailers near schools in order to lure teenage smokers. He shows that Phillip Morris broke its pledge to withhold retail fees from stores caught selling to minors. And he confronts tobacco industry heavyweights and their political allies to make sense of the industry that rakes in billions while abetting millions of deaths.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Nominations for stories run in July and August are due September 15.

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Tidbits & Outrages

HAPPY MEAL SPECIALS: ARYAN DELUXE AND CHICKEN MCGENETICS

The president of the Japanese division of McDonald's, explaining how their food will be good for the Japanese public, says, "The reason Japanese people are so short and have yellow skin is because they have eaten nothing but fish and rice for 2,000 years; if we eat McDonald's hamburgers and potatoes for 1,000 years, we will become taller, our skin will become white and our hair blond."

IT HAS THAT SPECIAL GLOW

The New York Times reports that, according to the Love Canal Revitalization Agency's sales agent, Love Canal is now "the place to live in Niagara Falls."

THIS *IS* YOUR FATHER'S PONTIAC

General Motors is resurrecting its 1959 "Wide-track Pontiac" advertising theme for its 1997 Grand Prix.

FAVORITE ACTIVITIES: AUTOMATIC RIFLERY, MENTAL GYMNASTICS

The Los Angeles Times reports that one of the features of the John Birch summer youth camp in Angelus Oaks, California, is the "Night Patrol, a roving band of camp counselors wearing swords and strange headgear who storm into cabins" to "instill resentment against excessive police power."

PEOPLE IN THE GLASS BUSINESS SHOULDN'T THROW STONES

A rash of window-breakings in New York ended when one of the owners of Adams Glass in Yonkers was caught smashing a plate-glass door with a slingshot.

CLICK HERE FOR SWEET'N'LOW SONNETS PAGE

The World Wide Web now has a page devoted to haiku poems about Olestra, Proctor and Gamble's new fat substitute.

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO MITSUBISHI

PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENTS OF INTEREST TO LAWYERS

Interactive CD-ROM Teaches Basics of Sexual Harassment

From *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly*

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Stay At Home, Moms

It sounds wholesome, but requiring teen mothers on welfare to live with their parents may do more harm than good

BY AMANDA RIPLEY

"Keep children who have children at home where they belong," President Clinton decreed this spring, calling on all states to "make it clear that a baby doesn't give you a right, and won't give you the money, to leave home." The welfare reform legislation recently passed by Congress and signed by Clinton makes it clear indeed: All states will now have to mandate that teen mothers who receive public assistance not only stay in school, but live at home. Amidst the outcries surrounding the reform's passage, next to nothing was said about this seemingly benign provision. The messy details of the live-at-home rule, however, say a great deal about what we can expect from this round of welfare reform.

Even before the federal requirement, the live-at-home rule has been spreading like wildfire among the states. Since the Family Support Act of 1988, states have had the option of requiring parents under 18 to live at home or in some supervised adult setting in order to receive welfare. Twenty-one states have already chosen to implement the provision—13 in the last year alone.

That's because, at first glance, the policy sounds so sensible. Teen moms need all the support and structure they can get. It is hardly unreasonable to require them to live in adult-supervised environments. Policymakers and much of the public agree that the government should not pay teens to move out of their homes; yet in many places, teens have been getting a bigger check when they do so. Proponents reason that the live-at-home rule will end this perverse incentive to move out.

Except that, more often than not, teen mothers don't leave home for a bigger welfare check. They leave because they're either not welcome or not safe at home. And that's only one of the policy's flaws. Even as the federal government rushes to expand the requirement, for example, there's remarkably little data by which to evaluate the impact of the policy. And while the welfare legislation does contain a provision to exempt teens from unsafe homes, the exemption is vaguely phrased and relies solely upon the discretion of overworked, often undertrained, state caseworkers. Meanwhile, the alternative to sending

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teens home—adult-supervised group homes—costs more money than either the federal government or the states are willing to put out.

Home Is Where the Hurt Is

Lawmakers are right on one count: For impoverished young mothers, living alone is far from idyllic. Takesha Mitchell, who first ran away from home at age 15, lives on her own with her two children in D.C. She says there's no one to help her. Each month she receives $326 in cash assistance, but "it's really, really hard" to make the money last. Mitchell says she wants to work because she's so bored at home. In the meantime, her check was recently scaled back. Sometimes, Mitchell says, she gets so frustrated with her children that she catches herself falling into the same abusive patterns her mother taught her.

The possibility of Mitchell abusing her children is frightening. But so is the prospect of Mitchell and her children returning to the home where she learned that behavior firsthand. Mitchell says she left home because her mother abused her mentally and physically and used drugs. Eventually, she says, her mother wouldn't let her return anyway.

Teen mothers usually don't move out to get a bigger welfare check. They leave because they're not welcome or not safe at home.

Teen mothers are more likely to come from families that are already poor, have been on welfare for over a generation, and are headed by former teen parents themselves. "If kids have a supportive family environment, nine out of ten times they will stay," according to Lauren Paine, program manager at Ruth's House, a structured living center for teen mothers in Massachusetts. When teens do move out, it's usually for good reason.

Recent studies show that a majority of poor teen mothers have been victims of sexual abuse, and that incest survivors are more likely to become pregnant during adolescence than girls who are not sexually abused. A 1992 study by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect sampled a large and diverse pool of young mothers who became pregnant as teenagers. The researchers found that nearly half of the women had been raped at some point. About the same proportion had been violently abused. Over two thirds had been sexually abused, a majority of them by a family member when the girls were not yet 10 years old. These numbers are dramatically higher than the rates for the general female population.

The scant data collected by state welfare agencies confirm these findings. Michigan, which enacted the live-at-home requirement in 1992, found that 46 percent of the 1,468 teen mothers who lived independently in 1994 had been kicked out by their parents or guardians. Thirty-seven percent would be at risk of injury, abuse, or neglect if they moved back home. Almost as many teens were already known to Michigan's child welfare workers because their families had been involved in cases of abuse or neglect.

But it's not just abuse that sends teen mothers from their homes; so can a variety of other circumstances. Take 18-year-old Sara Emmert of LaCrosse, Wisc., who has lived at a residential support center for four months. Her baby boy is due in October. Because her baby is bi-racial, Emmert's parents would not let her stay at home. "I didn't have anywhere else to go," she says, explaining how she ended up at the center.

Despite these realities, state welfare reform measures—and now their federal counterpart—have been quick to sterotype, and thus condemn, teen mothers. Last year, Massachusetts implemented the live-at-home requirement as part of Governor William Weld's welfare overhaul. Since implementation, the number of teens receiving welfare in Massachusetts has dropped significantly. For now, the state has no idea why. States generally aren't required to monitor the effects of the live-at-home provision. And in any event, no sound research can be done without a control group—which states don't have.

Likewise, Wisconsin, which implemented the live-at-home requirement in 1993, has no data on

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the policy's effects. Early in 1995, the state could not even say how many teen mothers were receiving welfare, since their agencies were in the process of automating their data collection system. They're still working on it today. Yet Governor Tommy Thompson's administration plans to make the live-at-home requirement even more stringent and sweeping under his reform plan.

Nowhere to Hide

If a teen mother can prove that returning home will put her in danger, the law does provide an escape clause. The new federal legislation requires all teens to live at home unless the state agency determines that the mother has been or could be abused living with her family. Yet the directives offer no standards for how state caseworkers should assess whether the teen is in danger. The responsibility of protecting vulnerable teen parents rests heavily on the shoulders of the individual states and their caseworkers.

But caseworkers often show a serious "lack of understanding about how teens think," according to Joan Tighe, executive director of the Alliance for Young Families in Boston. Caseworkers generally have far too many clients and little or no training in dealing with teens. The Child Welfare League of America recommends case management ratios that are lower than 50 to 1. Some states have ratios as high as 500 to 1. While these overburdened workers shuffle through the paperwork, teens and their children wait for assistance and a suitable home—sometimes for two months or more. In Massachusetts, teen parent programs report that some state workers have been misinforming teens—issuing them ultimatums to either go home or lose benefits—without explaining opportunities for exemptions or for placements in alternative settings.

The need for intensive case management is particularly vital for victims of abuse, who generally reveal their histories only to people they trust. But teen mothers often have little reason to trust anyone. When Mitchell went to apply for welfare, for instance, the caseworkers "made me feel like I was low." She claims state workers treat young mothers—the most at-risk welfare population—with less respect than older women. And states are unable or unwilling to spend the additional money needed to hire more workers or train them to deal with teenage moms.

Under the new federal legislation, teens who manage to gain exemption from living at home are to be placed in adult-supervised settings. Given what the data show on the quality of teen mothers' family situations, you would think states would be scrambling to prepare for an influx of teen mothers into group homes.

Hardly. Consider Wisconsin, which plans to force all teen mothers to either return home or live in adult-supervised residences next year under an even more radical reform program than it now has. Jean Rogers, an administrator in the state's Department of Work Force Development, says she's confident that group homes will be able to accommodate all mothers unable to return home. "We expect that only a fraction ... will need to be placed [in group homes]," she says, because "a number will stay with their parents when faced with the alternatives." The idea of teens returning to abusive or unsuitable homes does not concern Rogers, who claims that "often the homes are not all that terrible.... It's often just a combination of a frustrated parent and a rambunctious teen." But all available research contradicts her sunny assessment.

Not only that, but administrators of living centers in Wisconsin strongly disagree that there are enough adult-supervised settings to absorb the exempted population. Gerard Hall, a residential support center for teen mothers, has been in operation for 70 years. But today, according to supervisor Julie Conway, "a lot of teens fall through the cracks." The center provides teens with parenting courses, requires them to pursue educational goals, and offers counseling and substance abuse treatment, all for about $119 per day, per mother and child. Yet Gerard Hall frequently turns needy teens away, even as it operates below full capacity, because of insufficient county funding.

The same is true across the country. A statement compiled by advocacy groups such as the Center for Law and Social Policy, Family Service America, and the National Women's Law Center notes that "adult-supervised living options are largely unavailable." In Tennessee, there are three such centers in the entire state. Robinson Regen, an administrator at Monroe Harding Children's Home in Nashville, has watched state funding dry up during the last few years, leaving her agency struggling to raise about $100,000 in lost aid.

But don't look to the congressional welfare re-

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form bill to solve the problem: It provides no additional federal funding for the "adult-supervised settings" it says exempted teens must live in. That means it's in states' interests *not* to see problems at home, because doing so means finding a costly alternative placement.

Without money to back it up, in other words, the live-at-home policy has real flaws—a fact U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) spokesman Michael Karfen concedes. "It's not a perfect picture," he admits, even as he maintains that the live-at-home requirement is a "good, appropriate policy." Asked how HHS plans to monitor and learn from states' experiences, Karfen acknowledges that no formal procedure is in place. Instead, he expects anecdotal information to "trickle in" over the next few years. To make sure things don't go awry in the implementation, he says, the public will just have to pressure states to "be more accountable." Given widespread public indifference to the plight of welfare mothers, it's hard to be optimistic that such pressure will materialize.

Ideally, each state would implement a generous exemption policy backed up by funding for alternative living centers. Each agency would employ specialists with more expertise and fewer cases to deal with all adolescent recipients. Teen mothers who have been abused would have access to extensive support services to interrupt the cycle of abuse. They would receive increased education and job training services, since victims of abuse often suffer from stunted developmental growth. And states would have to monitor the effects of the live-at-home requirement and perform reliable analyses on its long-term impact.

This wish list, of course, has as much chance of being fulfilled as universal health care does of clearing Newt's Congress. In the meantime, the only welfare "reform" the government has approved cuts spending by $56 billion. Real welfare reform costs money. But until politicians and the public accept that, we will continue to see policies like the live-at-home requirement—a provision that has never been evaluated for its efficacy, that contradicts the little we know about teen motherhood, and that could force teen mothers unwilling to return home into even more desperate straits. With little ado, that policy just became federal law. It may also become a lesson in how a well-intentioned but poorly conceptualized solution can turn out to be a problem of its own. □

Who's Who

Are there any other fibs in **Joe Klein**'s past? Maybe one we were reminded by one of our alumni. It happened way back in 1979. Klein characterized the style of a book he was reviewing as "painfully trite" and "typical" of its co-author **Jack Anderson**. But everyone at the *Monthly* recognized the style as that of the other co-author, **James Boyd**, then a frequent contributor to this magazine, whose prose was characterized by an originality that was never, ever trite. Some of those here suspected that Klein didn't read the book, or, to put it more gently, that he didn't peruse it with the care one would expect of a conscientious reviewer. So, Joe, the statute of limitations has run out on this one, but some of the *Monthly* gang still remember....

Lisa Caputo, **Hillary Rodham Clinton**'s press secretary, is the first of many Clintonites who will leave this fall. Besides **George Stephanopoulos** and **Leon Panetta**, don't be surprised if **Rahm Emmanuel**, **Doug Sosnik**, and others hit the road....

Now that **Trent Lott** is Senate majority leader, the Mississippi Mafia is riding high. One member, **Edward Fritts**, is said to have persuaded Lott to reverse **Bob Dole**'s preference for auctioning digital television licenses to give the taxpayers a break. Lott and **Newt Gingrich** have told the FCC they favor giving the licenses free to present station owners. Other potential influentials include the firm of Griffith and Rogers, which was founded by **Haley Barbour**, and is likely, according to *The Washington Post*'s **David Segal**, to be the lobbying outfit with the best access to the new majority leader. The firm's members include **James Johnson**, who has been Lott's friend since student days at the University of Mississippi, and **Christopher Henrick**, who worked on Lott's House staff....

Mike Murphy, who will lead **Bob Dole**'s ad-making team along with **Don Sipple** and **Andy Berlin**, has an ad in his history that should make **Bill Clinton** nervous. Done for **Oliver North**'s Senate campaign in Virginia, it featured a *Playboy* cover of a woman who said she had an affair with **Chuck Robb**. The ad asked "Why can't Chuck Robb tell the truth?" But then again, the President can take comfort from the result of that election. Murphy's client lost....

When **Michael Patrick Flanagan** successfully sought to unseat **Dan Rostenkowski**, he scorned Rosty's fabled ability to bring home the bacon for his constituents. "Pork," Flanagan declared, "has not served this district well." Now, according to **Janet Hook** of the *Los Angeles Times*, Flanagan has changed his mind and is "campaigning the old-fashioned way: by bringing home the bacon and bragging about it."...

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Holbrooke's Rage...Kathy's Clout
The Mississippi Mafia... and Joe's First Fib...

One of the hidden powers in the White House is **Kathy Wollman**, the deputy to counsel **Jack Quinn**. From court nominations to Whitewater, she wields enormous influence....

When a CNN producer in New York told **Richard Holbrooke**, who was in a Belgrade studio waiting to be interviewed, that there would be a delay because of an update on the TWA disaster, Holbrooke "launched into one of his celebrated rages," according to **Michael Dobbs** of *The Washington Post.*

"You don't understand," Holbrooke told the producer. "We have to be back in Washington for meetings at the White House. I must report to the Secretary of State. Our aircraft has a fixed time slot. If we don't get this slot, we will have to overnight in Shannon, Ireland. We have to leave this building in precisely seven minutes."

Dobbs reports that this produced howls of laughter from the U.S. negotiating team in the control room. "The notion of a fixed slot time at Belgrade airport—one of the world's most underused air traffic facilities—was preposterous." But with a minute to go, New York caved. The interview went on the air. Another Holbrooke bluff had worked....

Roman Genn

Speaking of **Trent Lott**, one source offered this insight about the majority leader to *The New York Times's* **Michael Wines:** "He's a man who likes to have control of circumstance and the Senate is a difficult place for such people."...

Strom Thurmond, **Richard H. Bryan,** and **John McCain** are among the senators who jumped on Secretary of Defense **William Perry** for failing to have stationed his troops in Saudi Arabia far enough away from potential bombs. Yet, according to *The Washington Post*'s **Al Kamen**, these three safety-firsters had voted to open up Pennsylvania Avenue to traffic, exposing the White House to similar danger....

Back again to **Trent Lott**. That instinct for control extends to having a dress code for Senate staff. According to **Jamie Stiehm** of *The Hill*, Lott requires female staff to wear dresses or skirts along with lipstick when they go to the Senate GOP cloakroom. And the desire for control doesn't stop with matters of attire. Lott, Stiehm reports, has also said that "on Tuesdays, when the GOP conference meets for lunch, he does not plan to brook dissent, but rather intends for the leaders to lay out the program."...

Bob Dole's irritation with **Katie Couric** and others for raising questions about his more than $400,000 in contributions from the tobacco industry inspired this comment by **William Kristol**: "People with long and distinguished records like Bush and Dole seem to have a notion that when they're running for president, they should not be bothered with such questions. They convey a sense that campaigning altogether is an annoyance to them, and voters don't take to that attitude." ...

Speaking of contributions from the tobacco industry, until **Bob Dole**'s record take this year, the previous annual champion was none other than **Willie Brown**, now San Francisco's mayor but for many years the speaker of the California State Assembly. In 1995 he got $85,250 from the cigarette companies, bringing his lifetime total from the industry to $636,000. In case you're interested, the runner-up to Brown is Senator **Jesse Helms**....

In case you missed it, here's an interesting paragraph that got buried in a recent article in *Time* comparing **Hillary Clinton** to **Elizabeth Dole**: "Hillary may be the velvet fist in an iron glove, Elizabeth the reverse. The First Lady is considered wonderful to work for, devoted to her aides (who repay her with a loyalty that has cost them thousands of dollars in legal bills); she consults them about their lives, their loves, their clothes; she likes to have fun. Elizabeth, by comparison, is working on her third press secretary in six months. Kicking back with aides, admits one who worked closely with her for a half-decade, 'is rare.' Hillary's aides love to tell about the First Lady at play; an aide to Elizabeth could think of only one example in five years."...

—Susan Threadgill

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Snakes in the Grass

How slick corporate lobbyists are co-opting grassroots techniques

BY CHARLES W. BAILEY

In the days of Norman Rockwell, the image summoned up by the phrase "grass roots" was definitely benign. It evoked visions of pipe-smoking farmers exchanging pithy aphorisms around the stove in the general store, or small-town businessmen swapping common-sense comments on the day's news at the Main Street cafe.

But today that image is as out of date as the Model T. "Grass roots" has a new meaning—more astroturf than grass, more sinister than benign, more fake than real, more Orwell than Rockwell. The aim, one practitioner said, is "to make a strategically planned campaign look like a spontaneous explosion of community support." Another Washington public relations man put it this way: "The purpose of the grassroots program is not to get more Americans involved in the political system. The purpose of a grassroots program is one purpose, period, and that is to influence legislative policy."

Older, more traditional forms of lobbying—campaign contributions, one-on-one persuasion by Washington lawyer-lobbyists, and the like—are still in use and continue to swallow large amounts of money. But new technology and a changed political context have put a greater value on the new kind of lobbying. Some find it ironic that corporate America has adopted and adapted this technique. After all, "grassroots lobbying" is itself an oxymoron. And it was pioneered by big business's traditional enemies, the labor unions and the public interest groups—the Naderites, the anti-nukes, the environmentalists.

Corporate America's co-option of this technique is different—and more dangerous—for several reasons. The corporations and their hired hands, the lawyer-lobbyists and PR firms, work on a continuing basis, planning for the long haul. Their plans are ambitious—and they are bad news for the ordinary citizen.

Jack Faris, president of the National Federation of Independent Business, which claims to represent 600,000 small businesses nationwide, discussed his plans with Haynes Johnson and David Broder, authors of *The System*:

> Our goal for the year 2000 for the election of the

Charles W. Bailey is a member of The Washington Monthly's *editorial board. Research assistance provided by Amy Feldman, Tim Kasulis, and Jason Morgan.*

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president of the United States...is to have candidates from both parties who are sold out for small business and free enterprise....In the Senate our goal is to have at least 60 members that either own small businesses or have proven by their voting records they understand what's good for small business. We want 250 votes in the House of Representatives either to be small-business owners and/or those who support small-business owners.

Grassroots lobbying is a means—a very effective means—to that end. It's no coincidence that, whether in opposing health care or supporting the Contract with America, NFIB has been at the forefront of the astroturf explosion.

Instead of ordinary citizens writing their representative a letter, a PR man in Washington writes it and adds the signature of the "author."

As always, the corporate lobbying and PR effort is well endowed. Business provides the money, lots of it. Where the money is going these days is into high technology, which multiplies the effect of corporate grassroots lobbying a thousandfold. There are the computer and the fax machine, sophisticated new telephone devices, and even software programs that can convert poll results and demographic data into tightly focused lists of thousands of citizens who can then be contacted by the latest telemarketing techniques.

Central to the new grassroots lobbying is fear: congressmen afraid of angering voters, workers afraid of losing jobs, old folks afraid of losing benefits or savings, businessmen afraid of government regulation. And this new fear-driven multimedia lobbying has proved its effectiveness. The highest-profile and highest-stakes example was the defeat of the Clinton health care plan in 1994. But there were earlier cases:

• In 1978, the Maryland legislature took up a utility regulation bill that was anathema to the state's power companies, Baltimore Gas & Electric and Potomac Electric Power Co. The companies told their 66,000 stockholders the bill would devalue their stock; the stockholders responded with an outpouring of mail, calls, and personal visits to legislators that buried the bill. The use of stockholders was a rarity then; today, stockholder activism, carefully cultivated by corporations, is becoming the rule. A recent mailing from the Coca-Cola Co., for example, urged stockholders to join its "Civic Action Network (CAN)," which would keep stockholders updated about legislation affecting Coca-Cola—and, more importantly, inform them how to contact elected representatives to "make your opinions known." Industry sources estimate that in two years, CAN has already recruited 50,000 members.

• In 1983, the American Bankers Association whipped up such an avalanche of mail—an estimated 22 *million* postcards, letters, and mailgrams—that Congress repealed a newly passed law requiring banks and savings and loans to withhold income taxes on interest and dividend payments.

• In 1990, auto industry lobbyists mounted a deceitful but effective grassroots campaign against stiffer gasoline mileage standards. The companies claimed that requiring them to increase the average miles per gallon of their products would force them to build nothing but small cars. Groups ranging from nuns to police deluged their representatives with protests.

One factor in the success of the new grass-roots technique is that it hits the member literally where he lives—back in the district—and reminds him that he can lose his job if he displeases enough voters. So when a lot of his constituents contact him—or *seem* to be contacting him—he will think twice about ignoring their demands. You can turn down money, but it's hard to turn down votes.

Michael Bromberg, a veteran Washington health care lobbyist, explained his enthusiasm for the new grassroots strategy to Eleanor Clift and Tom Brazaitis, coauthors of *War Without Bloodshed: The Art of Politics*:

One of the perceptions about lobbying is that you go out drinking, and the guy's your buddy so

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he does you favors. Those days are long gone. That sort of thing may work on tiny things like a technical amendment to a bill, but on big, important issues personal friendships don't mean a thing....

I'll bet we could have done just as good a job as we did [in the health care fight] without ever going to the Hill or ever talking to a member of Congress. It is knowing when and how to ask the troops in the field to do it.

And how do they do it? By turning traditional grassroots action upside down: Instead of ordinary citizens sitting down in their kitchens and writing their representative a letter, a PR man in a Washington office writes it, adds the signature of the "author," and delivers it to the targeted member of Congress in Washington. All the citizen has to do is say yes; he often never sees the letter, let alone composes it.

Occasionally this process produces some unintended—and embarrassing—consequences. During the fight over the heavily lobbied telecommunications bill, thousands of telegrams supposedly expressing the views of individual citizens were sent by lobbyists without the permission of those whose names were used. Suspicious members of Congress began to check the authenticity of signatures on the telegrams they received. They got some intriguing answers: Some signers were dead; some no longer lived at the addresses listed; some were traveling abroad; and a great many said they had never been called or asked to sign.

Such incidents tend to make legislators skeptical about mass-produced letters or telegrams. They pay some attention to them, but much more to individually composed or handwritten messages. Still, even those letters may have been manufactured by a PR firm. Making it easy for citizens to express their views—and making sure they do it—has been greatly aided by modern telecommunications technology. A telemarketer can sit in a Washington phone room and call a congressperson's constituent. The constituent doesn't know it, but she has been selected by a combination of electronic and human intelligence as a likely supporter of the telemarketer's client.

The key tool in that process is a computer pro-

"It's Got to Look Real"

In December 1994, a few weeks after the startling Republican victory in that year's congressional elections, political public relations practitioners gathered at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Chicago for a conference on grassroots lobbying. Among the speakers was Mike Malik, vice president of Optima Direct, a Washington PR firm that offers grassroots organizing to corporate clients. Malik's explanation of his company's operation was tape-recorded at the conference by John Stauber, Editor of PR Watch *magazine and coauthor of* Toxic Sludge is Good for You. *What follows is Stauber's report, based on that tape.*

"This isn't rocket science," says Mike Malik. "In fact, it's 'Direct Marketing 101.' We do junk mail and junk phone calls. Everybody hates that stuff, but it works....

"Mail is what you do when you have more time. The mass of Americans don't care. So you want to find the people who do care, and then you want to find the people who will take action on your side of the issue.... It's really easy to get lists of people who might be affected by your issue.... Build a database that will track mail response.... Follow it up with a phone call, find out where they stand, mark it down in a database so you can target who you want to call again right before a vote."

When an issue is actually coming up for a vote, Malik turns to his phone banks. "Phones are for speed. Another advantage of the phone is that it's really flexible. You test-mail, get results in three weeks, and make adjustments. With phones you're on the phone today, you analyze your results, you change your script and try a new thing tomorrow..."

Malik explains: "I'm talking to you, and I say, 'Hey, are you with me on the issue?' and we have a little conversation. You say, 'Yeah, I'll talk to my legislator.' I say, 'Great, I'll connect you now.' You need a shop that has a switch that you can push a button and they are connected, and they are off, and your live operator is on the outbound talking to the next person. That's advanced switches ... Space the calls out throughout the day—it's got to look real." □

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gram called "merge-purge." It enables the lobbyist to combine several computerized lists of names so as to define a potential target for the grassroots organizer by at least two characteristics—say, by zip code/congressional district/party registration, or white female/gun owner/PTA officer. In some cases, poll data are cranked into the mix, providing information on the citizen's views as well.

There are variants of this basic scenario: If the constituent seems to agree with the lobbyist-telemarketer's pitch, she is asked whether she would be willing to write a letter to her representative. In *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You: Lies, Damn Lies, and the Public Relations Industry*, John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton report what John Davies, head of Davies Communications in Santa Barbara, Calif., says happens if the constituent says yes:

> We get them on the phone, and while we're on the phone we say, "Will you write a letter?" "Sure." "Do you have time to write it?" "Not really." "Could we write the letter for you? I could put you on the phone right now with someone who could help you write a letter. Just hold, we have a writer standing by." ...
>
> If they're close by, we hand-deliver it. We hand-write it out on "little kitty cat stationery" if it's a little old lady. If it's a business we take it over to be photocopied on someone's letterhead. We use different stamps, different envelopes.... Getting a pile of personalized letters that have a different look to them is what you want to strive for.

In yet another variant, if the telemarketer is satisfied that the constituent agrees with his pitch, he transfers her directly to the office of the constituent's congressperson, using a special switch to "patch through" the call. This ensures that the newly motivated constituent actually makes good on her commitment—and does so while the lobbyist's arguments are fresh in her mind.

The grassroots lobbyist's real comfort zone, however, is bringing the legislator into direct contact with his most influential constituents. Robert Pyle, a former Republican field man who now runs his own PR firm, explains how it works: "We find out who are the key members, such as the conferees [the members of the committee that writes the final version of a bill], and then we see which towns and cities they represent. We usually talk with the president of the [client] company to get key names from him.... Then we contact those people and others like them to explain the issues and suggest they contact their congressman."

The phone calls, he says, typically go to Chamber of Commerce members, union leaders, newspaper editors, plant managers, and employees of companies in the congressional district that would be affected by proposed legislation. For those who agree to cooperate, Pyle makes it easy: "We have them fax us their letterhead and their signature. We insert the message and hand-deliver it to the member, usually the same day."

Another technique favored by grassroots lobbyists is known as "grasstops": the use of people who are influential, meaning prominent in the community and personally acquainted with a targeted member of Congress. One insurance company lobbyist is quoted by Clift and Brazaitis: "It's the difference between getting 5,000 postcards from people you don't know, and getting 25 handwritten letters from people you do know, or five phone calls from people you went to college with—or one personal visit in your office by the best man in your wedding." In other words, the emphasis is on the *quality* of each contact, not their quantity.

A pioneer grasstops operative was Matt Reese, whose PR company, Reese Communications, served such big-time clients as Phillip Morris, AT&T, and United Airlines. Reese retired in 1987, but a successor firm still thrives. Here's Reese's explanation of how it operates, as reported in *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You*:

> [We] begin by hiring a "District Liaison" from the ranks of the legislator's influential friends and leading business associates....This person should also be actively involved in the community and have some media contact.
>
> Once hired, the District Liaison works to organize a "business roundtable."... Like the District Liaison, the roundtable members are recruited from the legislator's business associates, major political contributors, and social contacts.... [They] create an artificial bubble of peer influence surrounding the target politician, so that legislators will get the feel of *total community support* for an issue.

Corporations, then, have mastered the art of shifting public opinion—or, in cases where they can't do that, at least making a legislator *believe* that public opinion is on their side. In such a process, the interests and voices of ordinary citizens don't count for much. □

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WHAT'S HOT at the APSA Annual Meeting

On August 29, 5,500 political scientists will gather in San Francisco for the American Political Science Association's annual meeting. Thousands of papers will be presented. The Monthly *asked a few of the country's top political scientists which papers are likely to be the most interesting. Their picks:*

THEDA SKOCPOL, professor of government and sociology at Harvard, is the author of *Boomerang: Clinton's Health Security Effort and the Turn Against Government in U.S. Politics.*

1. "Why '96 Will Be No '46 Rerun: How Realignment and Dealignment Should Affect Clinton's Strategy" by Martin Wattenberg, Andre Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, and Henry E. Brady
2. "Party Conflict Over Social Policy in the 1990s" by Margaret Weir
3. Roundtable discussion on Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*
4. "What are Political Consultants Doing to American Politics?" by Robert Entman
5. "'Saving Medicare': Interests, Narratives, and the Scope of Conflict" by Burdett A. Loomis
6. "The Reagan Presidency and the Growing Inequalities of the 1980s" by John W. Sloan
7. "Tobacco Industry Campaign Contributions and Legislative Behavior at the State Level" by Fred Monardi and Stanton Glantz
8. "So Proudly They Serve: American Women in World War II Films" by Sally E. Parry
9. "Deconstructing Newt" session
10. "Change and Transition in the American Feminist Movement" by Joyce Gelb and Jennifer Disney

LINDA FOWLER is director of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center and Reagan Professor of Policy Studies at Dartmouth. Her most recent book is *Candidates, Congress, and the American Democracy.*

1. "Is A Democratic Right to Privacy a Contradiction in Terms?" by Annabelle Lever
2. "Political Trust, Electoral Accountability, and Medicare Reform" by John D. Wilkerson
3. "Ideological Realignment in the U.S. Electorate" by Alan Abramowitz and Ronald Rapoport
4. "Union Responses to Market-Oriented Reforms Implemented by Labor-Based Parties in Latin America" by Maria Victoria Murillo
5. "The Impact of the Electoral System on Post-Communist Party Development: A Comparison of the 1993 and 1995 Russian Parliamentary Elections" by Robert G. Moser
6. "Television News and the Unmaking of President Bush: A Test of Media Effects on Party Identification" by John Bruce, Charles Smith, Herbert Weisberg, and Robert Lichter
7. "Strains in the Contemporary Democratic Coalition" by Benjamin Ginsberg and Martin Shefter
8. "Politicians and the Press: The Dynamics of News Dissemination" by Larry Bartels
9. "Money, Elections, and Candidate Quality" by Stephen Ansolabehere
10. "Whitewashing Prejudice" by Donald Kinder and Tali Mendelberg

JAMES M. GLASER, assistant professor of political science at Tufts, is the author of *Race, Campaign Politics, and the Realignment in the South.*

1. "The New Political Economy of Anti-Immigration: An Analysis of Support for Proposition 187" by R. Michael Alvarez and Natasha Unger
2.. "The Fragile Logic of Voting Rights" by Bruce E. Cain
3. "Strains in the Contemporary Democratic Coalition" by Benjamin Ginsberg and Martin Shefter
4. "Running as a Woman: Campaign Communication Strategies" by Kim Fridkin Kahn
5. "Voting Rights and Elections in Estonia and the American South" by David Lublin
6. "In Defense of 'Mirror' Representation" by Jane Mansbridge
7. "Impersonal Influence: The Role of Collective Opinion in Individual Judgment" by Diana Mutz
8. "Making the Transition to a Term-Limited Legislature: The California Experience" by Mark P. Petracca
9. "Urban Conservatism in an Age of Diversity: A Comparative Analysis of the Mayoralties of New York City's Rudolph Giuliani and Los Angeles's Richard Riordan" by Raphael J. Sonenshein, H. Eric Schockman, and Richard DeLeon
10. "The Good News in Bad Press: How the Rising Tide of Negative Presidential Campaign Coverage Serves Democracy" by John Zaller

MICHAEL J. SANDEL, professor of government at Harvard, is the author of *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy.*

1. "Stasis and Upheaval in American Politics: The 1990s" by Walter Dean Burnham
2. "The Right of Association and Paramilitary Groups" by Nancy Rosenblum
3. "Collegiality and the Supreme Court" by H.W. Perry
4. "Whose Unity? Which Diversity? Politics in a Multicultural Society" by Bhikhu Parekh
5. "Color-Blindness and the Politics of (Re-)Segregation: The Jurisprudence of Clarence Thomas" by Thomas Dumm
6. "American Politics as Layered Text" by Jeffrey Tulis
7. "Race and Ethnicity in the Pluralist Imagination" by Bonnie Honig
8. "The Hungarian Supreme Court Constitutionalizes Welfare Rights" by Kim Lane Scheppele
9. "Totalitarian Legacies, Civil Legacies, Civil Society and Democracy in East-Central Europe" by Grzegorz Ekiert
10. "In Defense of 'Mirror' Representation" by Jane Mansbridge

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Memo of the Month

STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
GEORGE E. PATAKI, GOVERNOR

Press Office
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FOR RELEASE:
IMMEDIATE, Wednesday
May 1, 1996

STATEMENT BY GOVERNOR GEORGE E. PATAKI

I commend the Senate for its timely passage of the Human Waste Assault Bill. Assaulting a correctional employee with human waste is a vile and disgusting offense that cries out for punishment.

It is now time for the Assembly to pass this important legislation. There is no excuse for delay. Inmates call the throwing of human waste "defecation education." I call it a felony and look forward to signing the bill into law.

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Judas, Brutus, and "A Senior Administration Official"

Why we have a political culture of disloyalty

BY AMY WALDMAN

Clinton frequently railed against people in his own inner circle who he felt had betrayed him and presented the media with a false portrait of him and the way he made decisions. "Traitors on my staff," he called them to more than one intimate.

—Bob Woodward, *The Choice*

As betrayals go, Richard L. Berke's front-page story in the July 21 *New York Times* ("After Hours at White House, Brain Trust Turns to Politics") was penny-ante. Participants in the Clinton administration's top-secret weekly strategy meetings had provided Berke with details of the meetings, complete with the no-food rule and a seating chart. But the story's ostensible news—the administration's "exceptional integration of Government and politics"—wasn't really news at all; that Clinton melds politicking and policymaking is common knowledge.

The true message the story telegraphed was that no sanctum of the Clinton presidency is impenetrable. As Berke noted, this was the "first time that details [of the meeting] have been divulged." He quoted an insider calling it the one meeting that "has been unpenetrated." Berke's article was a meta-story, in which the reader experienced the reporting as much as the meeting. "As one participant who had grown nervous after talking about the sessions ... added before hanging up: 'You never even spoke to me,'" Berke wrote. Several participants called back to say they had "grown increasingly nervous that the President would single them out for shattering the meetings' confidentiality.... After [a recent meeting], some participants reconvened to discuss what some viewed as a new political problem ...: what to do about this article and how the President would react." We were privy not just to the fact that people were violating Clinton's trust, but to the process.

Talking about a confidential presidential meeting is hardly high treason. In fact, it's often pretty harmless. But the story did reflect the almost pathological compulsion to betray the President that has been this administration's hallmark. From the outset, there has been a constant dribble of leaks on matters substantive and picayune, from lamp-throwing to budget deliberations, from health care to haircuts. And there has been a stream of books—framed by Bob Woodward's *The Agenda* and *The Choice*—that purport to

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give a blow-by-blow account of the presidency, and a wart-by-wart description of the President. It's no wonder Clinton feels surrounded by traitors: He can't tell if the people on his team are playing for him or themselves.

Disloyal subordinates are nothing new, of course. Judas turned on Jesus; Brutus and Cassius on Caesar. For doing so, all three were written into Dante's innermost circle of hell. They're not even new to the American presidency: Clark Clifford, for example, earned Margaret Truman's undying resentment because she felt he had undermined her father to enhance his own reputation.

But what was once an occasional occurrence, and one widely frowned upon (when Chester Bowles let on to reporters that he had been against the Bay of Pigs invasion, Kennedy exiled him to India), has become a regular feature of the presidency, escalating under Presidents Reagan and Bush and reaching new heights under Clinton. It's both a reflection of and a prime contributor to the presidency's—and this president's—political emasculation. From switch-hitting political consultants to the decline in party loyalty, America now has a politics of anomie, and it is from that treacherous ground that any modern politician governs. Of course, our politics match the culture at large, where the ties that bind individuals to institutions—whether political parties, corporations, or sports teams—also have been eroding.

"Disloyalty," though, is merely a semantic umbrella for a complicated phenomenon. Cassius and Brutus were both disloyal, but they were not of one mind. Cassius acted from ambition and envy of Caesar. Brutus acted out of concern for the people of Rome: "Not that I loved Caesar less," he said famously in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, "but that I loved Rome more."

Similarly, the acts that Clinton lumps together as betrayal also stem from different motives, and not all are self-interested. It's tempting to indulge in nostalgia for a golden age of loyalty, but it's also wrong. Cohesion had its costs, both personal and public. The trouble, it seems, is finding a way to serve the public, and the president, that culls the best of loyalty and disloyalty.

The Organization Men

In 1970, Roger Morris, Anthony Lake, and William Watts quietly resigned from Richard Nixon's National Security Council because they disagreed with the president's Cambodia policy. Soon after, Watts explained to the *Monthly* why he had chosen to resign with little public fanfare: "I just think the [president] has got to have enough confidence in his staff so that he doesn't have to worry that they will betray secrets or attack him in the press.... All the problems of running the country converge in that Oval Office, and I believe you should make every effort not to make those problems more difficult."

These men were on the cusp of two different epochs; our involvement in Southeast Asia was, in many ways, the fault line. The waning era had been grounded on a bedrock of patriotism, a loyalty to country cemented by the threats, challenges, and triumphs of two wars and the Depression. That patriotism, in turn, had translated into loyalty to the president—he was not just a man, but an institution, a vessel for the public's trust and interests. Presidential staff felt duty-bound to march in step with the president, at least in public. Denigrating him to the press was almost unthinkable.

In 1937, contemplating the issue of White House staff, Louis Brownlow concluded that they should be men of a certain character and mien: "They would remain in the background, issue no orders, make no decisions, emit no public statements ... they would not attempt to exercise power on their own account." Most famously, Brownlow decreed that they would have a "passion for anonymity."

Naturally, there were exceptions. Dwight Eisenhower, for example, endured a tepid, even gentlemanly, kiss-and-tell by his speechwriter, Emmet John Hughes. But on the whole, staffs were small and loyal, from FDR through much of the Johnson administration. At the height of the Cold War, there was a life-and-death urgency to governing. The president's men recognized that disloyalty could have unforeseen, and drastic, consequences, and so leaks were, if not absent, at least rare. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, for example, as

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Kennedy weighed options, his deliberations remained private. That allowed the President and his advisers to lean one way, then the other, until his decision-making came to fruition. Interfering with that delicate process through a leak could have triggered nuclear war.

But slowly, fissures began to appear in loyalty's pedestal. Brownlow had modeled his ideal presidential staff member on the culture of the corporation, where loyalty sometimes meant as much as performance. In the 1950s, the ideas that shaped this culture began coming under attack, most notably in William H. Whyte, Jr.'s 1956 book, *The Organization Man*.

Whyte's treatise was, in part, an attack on blind loyalty—a recognition that it could be used to coerce conformity as much as advance a cause; that it was as much a response to fear as to nobler human instincts. Whyte questioned the attempt to make "morally legitimate the pressures of society against the individual." Organization men assumed that "the ends of the organization and morality coincide, and on such matters as social welfare they give their proxy to the organization." They were, Whyte concluded, "imprisoned by brotherhood." That loyalty could oppress as well as unite was, of course, reinforced by McCarthyism and the anticommunist fervor of the late 1940s and the 1950s.

And there were costs to using loyalty to stifle dissent or embarrassing behavior in government. Kennedy would invoke the "national interest" to pressure reporters to kill stories, when in fact his political capital was at stake. His staff's loyalty protected his dalliances, at least some of which (namely mobster moll Judith Campbell Exner) were probably not in the country's best interest. People who did not serve Kennedy's interest —which was, as it is for any president, not always synonymous with the national interest—paid the price. And the Bay of Pigs, where an ill-advised plan was hatched and executed in secret, clearly showed the dangers of equating dissent with disloyalty.

But the low-water mark, and the defining moment, in the political and military establishment's use of notions of loyalty to stifle dissent was Vietnam. It pushed Americans, particularly in government, to examine the conflict between loyalty to their consciences and to their government or president. Journalists like David Halberstam resisted pressure to be "loyal" and instead insisted on being truthful. Government officials who opposed the escalating involvement became more willing to break the wall of silence, with leaks such as the one from the Pentagon in February, 1968, which exposed General Westmoreland's call for 200,000 more troops to win the war.

As our involvement in Vietnam escalated, Bill Moyers, Johnson's closest assistant, followed the president's orders and did not publicly dissent from his policies. But he discovered a way to stay loyal to his conscience as well as his master: He simultaneously was supplying the press with some of the more unpleasant facts about the war. In part, this was a way to reach the president, who didn't want bad news about Vietnam. Educating the public about the war was another way to pressure Johnson. And at the same time, Moyers was serving his own interests: He did not sacrifice his career in government, even as he enhanced his standing in the journalistic community. (Some of his White House colleagues understandably began to doubt his commitment to anonymity when his picture appeared on the cover of *Newsweek*.)

In retrospect, however, many Americans concluded that even more disloyalty on Vietnam would have been a good thing—that government officials with qualms about the war should have been more vocal about their discomfort. As James Reston wrote, "Most of those who stayed on at the critical period of escalation gave to the President the loyalty they owed to the country." That realization prompted many individuals throughout the government and the military industrial complex to begin grappling with competing loyalties: to their bosses, colleagues, and careers, and to their consciences. Daniel Ellsberg was among them. In leaking the Pentagon Papers, first to the Senate and then to the press, he not only betrayed the people he had worked with and for, but he broke the law. In doing so, he launched a fundamental attack on the cohesion of American institutions.

Ellsberg was the advance man for a new phenomenon in corporate America and government bureaucracies: whistle blowing, in which individuals dismayed at deceit, fraud, or waste in their organizations and institutions went public with their knowledge and suffered the consequences. Today, we take such acts—whether Jeffrey Wigand exposing the cigarette companies' deceptions or Mary Schiavo revealing the FAA's foot-dragging on ValuJet—for granted. Then, they represented a

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fundamental cultural shift. Loyalty had become contested ground, not just in the abstract sense of Whyte's ruminations, but in public servants' lives.

The Nixon presidency only confirmed that loyalty could be as much a vise as a virtue. Nixon and his inner circle believed, much like McCarthy, that loyalty could be coerced. Frustrated by leaks on Vietnam, Nixon once ordered H.R. Haldeman to begin lie detector tests of every State Department employee worldwide. And Nixon and his men operated on the principle that loyalty to the president outweighed all else. When Watergate came, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and their compatriots were loyal soldiers to the end, willing to break the law for the president they served, even though such actions directly countermanded the public interest.

They pressured John Dean to do the same. Instead, Dean sang to the press, the Watergate special committee, and the special prosecutor's office, and showed how loyalty was being used as a fig leaf to conceal abuses of power. But whereas Dean's disloyalty ultimately served the public interest, principle wasn't his only motive; fear of serving hard time may have been the more powerful incentive. Certainly the lesson that some subsequent White House aides seemed to have learned from Dean was that looking out for anything but their own hides was a mistake. Loyalty began to seem unnecessary, even constraining. Soon it became clear in politics, as it would a decade or so later in corporate America, that self-interest—and, if necessary, self-interested disloyalty—was the key not only to survival, but to advancement.

The Free Agent

In the 1960s and 1970s, new claims on loyalty began sprouting right and left: Groups—racial minorities, women, gays—who believed their government had never truly represented them transferred some of their allegiance to representatives of their own identities. Economic and political interest groups, such as the AARP, also began to splinter off the loyalty that had once belonged solely to political parties.

As cynicism superseded patriotism and opportunism replaced loyalty, the notion of how to get ahead in American life began to evolve. Good soldiers were losing. Despite his doubts about Vietnam, for example, Hubert Humphrey stayed faithful to Johnson for so long that many thought it cost him the 1968 election. Some of the Watergate crew who closed ranks around Nixon went to prison for it. Public servants and politicians began itching to establish their own bases. The question was how.

The answer, in large part, was the media. The advent of the television presidency and the Kennedys' charisma had made the White House a magnet. The White House press corps expanded dramatically—while Roosevelt had held press conferences in the Oval Office, Kennedy commandeered an auditorium—and the media maw needed feeding. Journalists wanted stories about the presidential kids, cats, and dogs. It was only a matter of time before they would turn to the staff and make behind-the-scenes players into public figures.

White House staff and cabinet members began to develop independent nodes of power within the presidency. The best way to build such a base was through the press—leaking to make them your friends and ensure that you appear in your best light. Henry Kissinger excelled at this, carefully cultivating the most influential journalists. He was also the quintessential opportunist. After working for Nelson Rockefeller, he went to work for his rival, Nixon, whom Kissinger despised. For Kissinger, a lust for publicity existed where a passion for anonymity was supposed to be, and soon his own celebrity began to overtake that of the president he worked for.

The self-promoting courtier had arrived. Why, Cassius asks Brutus in Shakespeare's history, should Caesar's name be sounded more than yours? "Write them together: yours is as fair a name...." That line approximates how Kissinger felt—the wrong man had the real power. He set out to change that, not with Cassius's knives, but with calculated subterfuge.

Kissinger specialized in disrobing the president to cover his own nakedness. In *Kissinger*, Walter Isaacson shows how he played the 1972 Christmas bombing of Hanoi like a violin. At a meeting with Nixon and Alexander Haig, Kissinger endorsed the bombing. Indeed, he effusively praised the decision: "Henry talked rather emotionally about the fact that this was a very courageous decision," Nixon wrote in his diary.

But when the public backlash against the bombing began and Kissinger was accused of excessive loyalty to his president (a charge that would have been unthinkable 10 years before), he quickly began putting distance between himself and the Pres-

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ident. In one interview he called the choice "certainly the most lonely decision the President has had to make." He seduced James Reston into writing a column stating that Kissinger "undoubtedly opposes" the bombing strategy. Nixon was furious, but Kissinger was publicly redeemed.

Kissinger wasn't the only one practicing the art of CYA under Nixon. David Gergen, for example, earned the nickname "The Sieve" with his self-serving leaks. (He would go on to become a notorious leaker under Reagan and Clinton, too.) Then came Watergate, and then came the books.

When Bush's power, as reflected by his poll numbers, began to ebb, so did his staff's fidelity.

Ten years before, Sorensen and Schlesinger had written the first histories of the Kennedy administration with an eye to their president's place in history. Loyalty persevered, even in death. But when Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein began writing *The Final Days,* the almost contemporaneous account of the Nixon administration's ebb, self-preservation rose to the fore. It was, for those of Nixon's men who cooperated, most notably Alexander Haig, the chance to write history and their place in it. Their cooperation with Woodward and Bernstein ensured that they would appear as heroes. They underscored how self-serving disloyalty could be.

Consider the infamous *Final Days* scene in which Nixon sobs while the strong but compassionate Kissinger looks on, comforting the president of the United States like a child. After he leaves, the president calls Kissinger with one final request: "Henry, please don't ever tell anyone that I cried and that I was not strong."

It seems that Henry did. And his reputation thrived. He got a fat NBC contract, and Gergen also became a media darling. Public servants began to sense that real public power meant having a media presence, a message confirmed by Kissinger, Gergen, William Safire, Pat Buchanan, John McLaughlin, and others who moved from government to journalism. White House staff now had one eye on their current employer and one on potential bosses in the press. What served the latter well—information—did not always serve the president.

Woodward and Bernstein flourished too, as did other Watergate authors like John Dean; the publishing industry scented blood in insider accounts and in turncoats and their stories. And the turnaround time became quicker. Four months after he left the White House, former chief speechwriter James Fallows limned an unsparing account of the Carter administration. To be fair, such efforts were partly a response to decades of sometimes corrosive secrecy about how government worked; the public's "right to know" was being legitimated. But at the same time, the piece helped make Fallows a journalistic star.

The cycle began accelerating: David Stockman didn't even wait until he left the White House to blow the whistle on his president. Stockman, you will recall, was the smart, young budget director who, in eight months of interviews with William Greider that were eventually collected in a 1981 *Atlantic* piece, revealed the confusion, cynicism, and, strangely, the excessive optimism at the heart of Reagan's economic program.

Committed to the original Reagan agenda, Stockman acted partly from frustration at its dilution by interest groups, Congress, and the Pentagon. But he also acted out of concern for his own image. Even as his program crumbled, he was continuously revising the historical record to make it appear as if everything had gone as he had foreseen—and if it didn't, it wasn't his fault.

True loyalty to his principles would have inspired Stockman to resign. Instead, he signed a statement saying he "fully believed" in the Reagan program, when all evidence was to the contrary, and stayed on. He was being loyal to his fortunes: He hadn't served long enough to parlay his experience into another powerful position.

Stockman wasn't the only traitor of sorts in the Reagan years. The White House was rife with self-promoters and competing policy fiefdoms. James Baker and Richard Darman made the same deal with the press that Al Haig had made with Woodward and Bernstein: The administration official provides journalists with information; in return they make the official look good.

Others were more blatant in their efforts to enhance their own images: After a series of near-mishaps, from Bitburg to the Iceland summit, Don Regan boasted about being the "shovel brigade" that had come along to clean everything up. The implication, of course, was that the President was

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the one leaving the mess. When Regan left, *Newsweek* wrote his political epitaph: "[H]e harmed the president to save his own pride."

By this point, presidents were delegating to swollen White House staffs, and candidates were answering to the army of consultants, pollsters, and handlers who ran their campaigns. Presidents suddenly seemed merely the sum of their parts—the people being the people who worked for them. Beginning with Carter pollster Patrick Caddell, those people began to seek credit for their work—to show that they were pulling the marionette's strings. If doing so made the president look like a dummy, so be it.

Where speechwriters, for example, had once toiled anonymously on a president's behalf, Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan demanded the equivalent of a by-line: Everyone was made aware of which speeches she had written. She later wrote a book to show she not only could write, but that she crafted her speeches to shape an out-of-touch president's policies. (Mark Helprin, who wrote Bob Dole's resignation speech, was the subject of almost as many stories as Dole was.) The Reagan years spawned enough books by staffers (Noonan, Stockman, Regan, and more) polishing their images for posterity to fell a forest.

Then Reagan yielded the presidency to a man with old-fashioned notions about loyalty, shaped by military service and Skull and Bones membership. The bonds held until the ship began to sink. George Bush's staff was loyal not to him, nor to the presidency, but to his power. When that power (as evidenced by his poll numbers) began to wane, so did his staff's fidelity. James Baker reluctantly took on Bush's re-election campaign, but then maintained a near-invisible profile. And he early on put out the word that the campaign wasn't salvageable, which dissociated him from the loss. (Colin Powell, incidentally, co-opted that tactic with the Persian Gulf War: He used Bob Woodward, who was working on *The Commanders*, to convey his doubts about a strategy he wasn't sure would succeed; that way, his reputation wouldn't stand or fall on its success.)

Then, just before the 1992 election, Woodward published a series on Bush's economic record in *The Washington Post*. Even in the era of self-interest, it was a milestone. The Judas in this case was Richard Darman, Bush's budget director. Clearly a key source, Darman came off as brilliant. By sniping at colleagues like Treasury Secretary Nick Brady, who seemed a fool, he made the President look like one too. Bush himself was described as, well, waffling—"a split personality," "a log floating in a turbulent sea," in the words of advisers.

Darman didn't bother resigning; nor was he punished. Bush, besides being just too nice a guy to exact vengeance, needed Darman, as Darman needed him. Codependency was superseding loyalty. The tone for the Clinton presidency was set.

The Mercenaries

I had many loyalists; Reagan had some; Bush had none. Who knows if Clinton has any? Probably not...

—Richard Nixon, as recounted by Monica Crowley

It's not entirely true that Clinton has no loyalists. Bruce Lindsey, whose friendship with the president dates back 25 years, has resolutely stuck by him, for example. On some matters, mainly Whitewater, the danger in fact may be an excess of loyalty to the President and First Lady, as the frequent "I don't recollect"s before Congress suggest.

But Clinton's presidency has, more than any other, offered a tableau of disloyalty, along with the noble, base, and simply human motives that inspire it. Clinton has, first, shown that it's impossible to command loyalty without commanding respect. All of the books that have been written about the Clinton administration convey the same message from his subordinates: This guy's untrustworthy and a potential embarrassment. *The Agenda* and Elizabeth Drew's *On the Edge* had painted Clinton as unprincipled, vacillating, and prone to volcanic rages. The brushes had been supplied by his closest aides.

Clinton has compounded this lack of respect by failing to inspire fear. George Stephanopoulos has hardly been button-lipped with the press, and his ruminations on Clinton's weaknesses provide some of the most damning material in the Woodward books. As Clinton shifts to the center, Stephanopoulos may be on the outs ideologically, but he remains close to the President. Mike McCurry characterizes Clinton as "mushy" in *The Choice* and says the President should avoid getting into a character contest with a Republican opponent because he'll lose. McCurry's status is undiminished. Dick Morris not only makes sure his role in resurrecting a flailing Clinton is well-

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known, but in *The Choice* he is quoted as saying Clinton will be indicted over Whitewater. Again, no penalty; Morris sits next to Clinton at those "top secret" strategy meetings.

In place of respect or fear, Clinton has inspired insecurity. He uses the "back door" rather than a hierarchical chain of command, so aides never know whom he's talking to. And subordinates feel, based on his treatment of friends and allies such as Lani Guinier and Jocelyn Elders, that they can't always count on his loyalty.

It's not just coincidence, however, that Warren Christopher is not known as a leaker or Clinton backstabber. He represents a different generation. Many of the Clinton aides grew up in an era in which government had been devalued. They have not survived world war or Depression, the formative experiences for public servants of the previous generation, and thus have little sense of public service as a duty or trust. Nor, incidentally, have most of them served in the military, which once helped breed patriotism.

A "passion for anonymity" has a nice ring, but it's hard to get a book contract or TV gig if no one's ever heard of you.

In short, the President's aides simply do not respect the presidency the way their forebears did. Dick Morris's initial political experiences, for example, were as a 1960s antiwar liberal, when government and the presidency were already sinking in esteem. Coupled with the convergence of the parties over the next 20 years and the decline in party loyalty nationwide, neither his indifference to party nor his tendency to put his interests above the President's are that surprising. He is a mercenary.

Clinton's young staff have, moreover, come of age in a confessional culture in which nothing is out of bounds for public consumption, no matter how personal—an ethos best exemplified by TV talk shows. Thus the seeming compulsion to reveal Clinton's purple-faced rages or his tearful Oval Office goodbye with Dee Dee Meyers. And they have grown up in an era in which public service, played right, can be very lucrative: A passion for anonymity has a nice ring, but it's harder to get a book contract or TV gig if no one's ever heard of you. The desire to advance their own interests is fed, indeed validated, by the anxiety rampant in corporate America; in an age of insecurity, those who put themselves first survive.

Political fortunes today depend on making a name, on working for winners; thus the effort to grab credit for advice given, policies developed, ads produced, speeches written. That's why those who leak to the press or cooperate with Woodward usually appear smart, strong, and principled. Al Gore, for example, has a lot to gain from shaping a reputation independent from Clinton's. Hence, throughout both Woodward books, for which Gore was a key source, he is the backbone to Clinton's spinelessness. As Clinton looks more like a winner, in turn, the sniping and leaking have diminished, or at least become more furtive. (Witness Mike McCurry's frantic attempts to distance himself from his digs at Clinton in *The Choice,* or the nervousness of Berke's sources.)

But not all of the disloyalty in the Clinton White House is about self-protection or self-promotion; nor does all of it deserve condemnation. Take Alice Rivlin's refusal, as recounted in *The Agenda*, to say that the deficit had unexpectedly ballooned between the campaign and Clinton's presidency, as his campaign advisers were pressing her to do. "Bill Clinton knew where this deficit was going," she told Paul Begala, "adding that they had to face the fact that the campaign fundamentally misrepresented the situation." Later, she told *The Wall Street Journal* that the "deficit reduction trust fund" the administration had proposed was a public relations stunt that would have no real effect. Begala accuses her of disloyalty. In fact, Rivlin was simply being true to the facts; she wasn't going to lie to the public for the president.

When facts that the public should know are being suppressed, voicing them—even leaking them, if necessary—is not treachery. Case in point: The Clinton administration, on the verge of signing a welfare reform bill in 1995, didn't want Health and Human Services data on the number of children it would push into poverty released, because if Clinton signed the bill he would appear harsh. But that's the kind of information the public needs to know—both to pressure the president one way or another before he makes up his mind and to judge him after he does. The information was leaked; Clinton vetoed the bill as a result.

Indeed, much of what Clinton sees as disloyalty is actually idealism in disguise. Many Clintonites

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are true believers; but, much like their boss, they believe different things on the same issue. As has been oft noted, the Clinton administration has been split between New Democrats and traditional liberals, the former represented by Gore, Bruce Reed, and—when he wasn't working for the GOP—Morris, the latter by Stephanopoulos, Harold Ickes, and the campaign team. Each camp thinks it represents the true Clinton.

Accordingly, some New Democrats felt betrayed by a health care reform plan they thought would be another entitlement; the traditional liberals felt the same about the sudden focus on deficit reduction. Clinton, meanwhile, was torn between the options. So some aides began leaking in a frantic effort to rescue their great causes, whether public investment or smaller government.

The problem, though, is that many chose to help their case by taking it not to the President, but to the press, and not by stating the facts but by revealing, and thus coloring, the administration's deliberations. The result, too often, has been a reactive presidency—Clinton constantly shifting course in response to what that day's papers said he had decided and the resulting minute-by-minute public or interest group reaction. Laying bare his deliberative process—one any president needs to engage in—undermined his credibility both in Congress and with the American people.

Anonymity, meanwhile, once a sine qua non for loyalty, has become the refuge of the disloyal: Anyone can hide behind a blind quote; more than a few Clintonites have. Consider a recent example in *The New York Times*, the day after Clinton decided to sign the welfare bill: "One Administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said tonight, 'This is a sad day for the country, a sad day for poor people and a day that will come back to haunt Bill Clinton throughout history.'"

There's certainly merit to that statement, and the desire to vent is understandable. But such a jab is not only ineffectual, but cowardly. If that's truly what you believe, then either say so with your name attached, or follow the example Lake, Morris, and Watts set in 1970: Resign, and explain why. That's what Cyrus Vance did over the Iranian rescue mission, and, more recently, what Matthew Miller did when he left the Office of Management and Budget because he disagreed with the Clinton administration's budget politics.

Too often, what's missing in the administration is not people willing to dissent from the President's decisions, but rather people willing to put themselves on the line to do so. The President's staff want Clinton to get re-elected, but they deride him for doing what he thinks he must to accomplish that. They want his agenda to succeed, but only if it is their agenda as well. They are quick to condemn him for his impurity, but they are not so pure that they will sacrifice their proximity to power. Perhaps loyalty is the wrong word for what's missing: A better one might be courage.

Bob Dole, most likely, agrees. He can't turn around without finding anonymous aides bashing him in the press—bemoaning his lack of vision and his inability to stay on message or hew to his TelePrompTer script. Aides recently trumpeted their success in getting Dole to stop speaking off the cuff. It admirably displayed their handling skills—but it made Dole look ridiculous.

To be fair, this is partly an effort to communicate with a candidate who tends not to listen to his advisers. But some of it is also the Baker-Bush phenomenon: Distance yourself from a losing cause so it won't sully your resume. No one better exemplifies this than Dole campaign manager Scott Reed, whose cooperation with Bob Woodward makes *The Choice* a showcase of Reed's importance and, all too often, Dole's impotence.

If the Dole campaign is any indication, the politics of anomie have taken root. "He is surrounded almost entirely by political professionals," *The New York Times*'s Adam Nagourney wrote of Dole, "as opposed to people who have a grounded loyalty to the candidate or ideology." The candidate has become just one more appendage of the campaign, no more or less deserving of loyalty than anyone else.

Reed, meanwhile, can be confident that he'll do just fine despite—or because of—his disloyalty. Consider Ed Rollins, the political consultant who has made a career out of embarrassing his candidates in order to make himself look good. Despite astonishing displays of self-aggrandizement, Rollins has continued to get hired for princely sums. Most recently, he's written a book trashing his past employers—and become a hot TV commodity as a result. Perhaps Rollins is now such a parody of disloyalty that he'll never eat lunch (or at least never work as a political consultant) in this town again. Given our recent history, it's more likely he'll dine all the way to the bank. □

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Just the Facts, Ma'am

Bob Woodward once again displays a knack for getting the telling detail—and omitting the necessary context

BY MATTHEW COOPER

The Choice
Bob Woodward, *Simon & Schuster, $26*

Through the early months of this year's presidential primaries, the word spread through the small fraternity of political reporters: Did you hear? Woodward's doing a book on the Republicans. Occasionally we would catch glimpses of him in action. Late one night this past winter, I sat in bed watching a Bob Dole campaign event being broadcast on C-SPAN. The aging Kansan was working a New Hampshire breakfast spot and there, with him, was Bob Woodward. When Dole got up from the table and went outside, Woodward followed him while the rest of the press corps was hustled off to waiting vans by pasty-faced advance men. Damn, I thought—he's getting in the car with Dole. I was envious of that valuable time in cars when you have a candidate's attention.

As the campaign went on, though, the fears of Woodward's book and what revelations it might hold began to dissipate among us "pencils." We had heard that Woodward had spent huge amounts of time with Phil Gramm and Pete Wilson, doomed candidates whose stories would not a bestseller make. We had heard that Woodward's long hours in Sacramento and College Station meant that he had spent too little time with Steve Forbes and Pat Buchanan, although any reader of *The Final Days* would have to suspect that Buchanan had been a longtime source for the *Washington Post* reporter. Suddenly, we political reporters were a little less fearful that Woodward's book would be an embarrassment for his competitors.

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To be sure, *The Choice* has its scoops. The big one was supposed to be Hillary Rodham Clinton's conversations with the dead. I confess I wish I had gotten that bit of inside knowledge. But I don't think I would have, à la Bob, hyped it so hard. The conversations were not seances, but a reasonable, albeit somewhat silly, exercise in imagining what it would be like to talk with Eleanor Roosevelt or Mahatma Gandhi. In the end, it should not have been a big deal.

This is typical Woodward—great reporting, but too little context or coherence. Woodward prides himself on his just-the-facts-ma'am approach, and, indeed, when many reporters rely on attitude or verbal pyrotechnics rather than old-fashioned shoe leather, there's something to be said for keeping the analysis to a minimum. Still, Woodward takes it too far, and the reader suffers for it.

Anyone who has seen Woodward on TV has a pretty good sense of what his writing is like. He speaks slowly, in a flat Illinois accent with barely any affect. This is what his books are like, a style parodied brilliantly by Art Levine in the pages of *The Washington Monthly* some 20 years ago, when he speculated how Woodward would have covered Hitler in his bunker. ("Himmler was worried. It wasn't like the Reichfuhrer to sulk....") Woodward gathers fact upon fact, and the effort is impressive. But his unwillingness to offer any kind of context leaves his books fatally flawed.

Consider *The Agenda*, his last Clinton opus, which traced the battle between two Clinton camps: the deficit hawks like Leon Panetta and the

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self-styled populists like Paul Begala. Woodward touted the book as a portrait of a White House in "chaos." He told the story of how Bill Clinton blew up at aides when it emerged that a trip to Chicago had been scheduled without a courtesy visit with Mayor Richard Daley. This was meant to show Clinton's out-of-control temper. In fact, Clinton's red-faced response to a staff screw-up seemed to me a proportionate reaction to offending the most powerful Democratic mayor in the country.

The greater sin of *The Agenda*, though, was in its failure to capture the big picture. The White House, painted by Woodward's brush, was hopelessly disorganized. There's certainly some truth to that sense of disorder. (I once waited three hours in a holding room in order to interview a senior official who came in breathlessly and said: "Forgive me. This place is completely screwed up. You want a cookie?") Still, what actually happened with Clinton's economic plan in the end seems to have been a very good thing.

The Choice is, in many ways, the opposite of *The Agenda*. The once incompetent Clinton is now portrayed as righting himself, moving toward the center, and becoming more focused—thanks to the savvy advice of the now legendary Dick Morris, the ambidextrous political consultant whom Clinton knew from his Arkansas days. It is true that Morris contributed mightily to the Clinton White House in some ways. His idea that the President should support a balanced budget was a wise move. And his interest in values issues—school uniforms, curfews—helped as well.

But the whole truth is somewhat more complicated. Clinton's recent success, it seems to me, owes to four big factors, only one of which is Morris. First, the Republicans wildly overreached after taking Congress in 1994. This would have buoyed Clinton whether he hired Morris or not; simply by being the anti-Gingrich, he was bound to rise. Second, Clinton no longer was proposing legislation. This is an enviable position to be in, since legislation—like the Clinton budget or health plans—is invariably controversial. Third, Clinton was helped by something that had little to do with Morris: the demagoguing of Medicare. Woodward gives it short shrift, but Morris favored cutting a deal with the GOP on Medicare. Whatever the merits of the deal, it surely would have been bad politics. George Stephanopoulos and Harold Ickes prevailed over Morris and convinced the President that he should give little on Medicare. Eventually Morris came around to this position, too. But it's important to remember that Morris's political instincts were way off base on this issue.

Woodward also gets inside the Colin Powell camp. The Powell he presents is a likable fellow—calm, self-confident, as comfortable fixing cars in his McLean driveway as he is attending a Georgetown gala. But Woodward, again, offers no analysis. He gives us great inside dope about how Powell thought through his potential candidacy with advisers Ken Duberstein and Richard Armitage. But it never occurs to Woodward to put these advisers in context. What does it say about Powell that he chooses to surround himself with these particular men? Duberstein is a Washington staple, a former chief of staff and a powerful lobbyist, and the architect of Clarence Thomas's comeback on Capitol Hill during the Anita Hill affair. That Duberstein is Powell's best friend suggests that a President Powell would have been a thoroughly establishmentarian figure.

This tendency of Woodward's is most frustrating when it comes to his coverage of the Dole campaign. Here, Woodward faithfully reports the internecine battles within the Dole camp—the rivalry between Scott Reed, the campaign manager and Jack Kemp protege, and Sheila Burke, the moderate former Democrat who was Dole's Senate chief of staff. Woodward, to his eternal credit, gets great stuff. There's a hysterical shouting match between Reed and Al D'Amato over affirmative action. And there's the terrific anecdote about Elizabeth Dole needing to schedule an appointment with her husband in order to talk campaign strategy. But Woodward recoils from even obvious observations. For instance, he dutifully reports how Mari Will, Dole's communications czarina and the wife of columnist George Will, convinces the senator that he must campaign on family values. This is deliciously ironic, since George Will divorced his first wife, as did the candidate himself.

More importantly, Woodward's access to Reed stops him from offering the kind of critical reaction that kept popping into this reader's head: This guy's terrible. Reed pushes Dole to cut taxes, something that Dole, a deficit hawk, clearly doesn't want to do. He pushes Dole to renounce affirmative action, even though the senator repeatedly voted for affirmative action programs. He returns a campaign donation from a gay Republican organization with-

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out telling Dole. And then he tries to convince Dole that it's the right thing to do, even though he knows that Dole has made it clear to the staff that he won't bash gays. In other words, Reed is forever trying to make Dole into someone that he isn't, which may explain why the candidate has begun reaching out to the likes of Donald Rumsfeld, the former White House chief of staff.

For Reed, 1996 is about trying to purge the ghost of 1988, the year in which Bob Dole ran as, well, Bob Dole, refusing to sign the ridiculous anti-tax pledge in New Hampshire or pander to the right. And yet Dole would clearly be better off by running as a more moderate candidate. Consider his farewell speech on the floor of the Senate, when he praised Hubert Humphrey, Bob Byrd, and George McGovern, when he waxed eloquent about food stamps and the merits of compromise. This is the Dole that could win.

And so we're left with much more knowledge about these candidates, and yet relatively little to help us make the choice this fall. That doesn't diminish Woodward's achievement. By unearthing great anecdotes, he teaches all of us reporters. But he also shows that reporting is about more than stenography and detective work. It's about thinking, analyzing, and explaining. Woodward is capable of offering that. But will he? Well, that's his choice. □

Who Killed Liberalism?

Why, the liberals, of course

BY JIM SLEEPER

The Inheritance: How Three Families and America Moved From Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond
Samuel G. Freedman, *Simon & Schuster, $27.50*

How I wish *The Inheritance* had been read by the author of every new book that has predicted an implosion of conservatism and a rebirth of some kind of progressivism. In close-grained reportage that sometimes achieves a novel's intimacy with its subjects, former *New York Times* reporter Samuel Freedman has traced the political evolutions of three white-ethnic families through three generations, from immigrants' ardent support of the New Deal through their grandchildren's active politicking for conservatives such as Lew Lehrman and George Pataki.

Freedman shows that these apostasies had less to do with any conservative conspiracy than with liberalism's abandonment of a class-sensitive politics in favor of one that redefined "need" in terms of countercultural, racial, gender, and other grievances and rights. The second and third generations—a plumber, a custodian, a department store manager, a gravedigger, and a state university student—watch as such policies divert resources, moral legitimacy, and political energy from a Democratic Party that once would have been worthy of their support.

But Freedman's stories don't begin or end there, and little in them should hearten conservatives or even old-style liberals who think they can win by rolling the clock back to 1964 or 1935. His subjects aren't selfless civic saints, and this is no morality play for either party to take on the road. Yes, liberals have dug their own graves by casting as "privileged" and "bigoted" the working-class whites who, in Freedman's nuanced telling, still nurse lingering immigrant injuries, Vietnam War sacrifices, and the myriad insecurities of a hard-won and closely guarded upward mobility. But now these people find themselves swimming in Republican corruption, ham-handedness, and

Jim Sleeper, author of The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York, *is at work on a new book about race.*

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racial hypocrisy that recall the New York Democratic machines their parents fled because the bosses suffocated independence and tolerance.

Is there a liberal Democrat younger than 40 who can feel in his or her bones how *hard* the lives of those white Polish, Irish, and Italian immigrants were in the pre-New Deal 1920s—how close they came to starvation on the streets, how humiliated they felt under the lash of a contemptuous yet "respectable" middle class that refused even to see what they endured? To feel it is to appreciate the depth of their loyalty to the Democrats—and how deep would be their progeny's sense of betrayal.

In Freedman's account, for example, the New Deal saved Edward and Lizzie Garrett, who had fled the grinding poverty of Hell's Kitchen for unheated hovels farther up the Hudson and, after nearly starving there, too, had found salvation in public jobs. Not 30 years later, though, the Garretts' bright young grandson, Tim Carey, was tracked at the bottom of his high school in Ossining and steered toward boiler repair, simply because he came from the wrong side of the tracks.

He was drafted into the Vietnam War and wound up protecting the Pentagon from anti-war demonstrators. And he discovered later that all the local boys killed in the war came from his town, not the more affluent Croton-on-Hudson. Not only had "his" Vietnam been a Democrats' war; the protesters who assailed him for having fought it were the children of liberal Democrats who attacked the "father-son" unions, family norms, and religious beliefs of his parents. Attending the State University of New York after getting out of the Army, Carey defied condescending guidance counselors to earn high grades while working a night-shift job, and in 1969 found other students who shared his disdain for snobbish whites and rioting blacks.

Carey volunteered in Richard Nixon's 1972 reelection campaign. Seven years later, after long conversations with conservative zealot and gubernatorial hopeful Lew Lehrman, whose driver he'd become, Carey had an epiphany upon hearing the candidate say in a speech, "Our economic crisis has become a moral crisis." As Freedman tells it, the sentence crystallized what Carey had been thinking under Lehrman's tutelage in the car. Suddenly, "It decoded his own life. He was playing by the rules in a society that had changed them. Couldn't he have screamed as loudly as any black about the bigotry of Ossining? Hadn't he dreaded the war as much as those college kids taunting him at the Pentagon?... He was still 'Timmy Two-Cent,' expecting pennies on the bottle, a fair reward for a fair effort. Welfare and affirmative action and the overlaying income taxes of county, state, and nation denied it to him. Lehrman's fusion of social conservatism and economic liberty promised its restoration." In 1994, Carey, by then a high-level election strategist, was vital to George Pataki's defeat of Mario Cuomo.

Carey and the other grandchildren of Freedman's families know that their forebears could never have bequeathed them even a glimmer of hope without the New Deal. Ronald Reagan and Newt Gingrich know it, too, which is why both have invoked FDR and professed, hypocritically, to want to redeem the best of his squandered legacy. But it has been squandered by its own Democratic legatees, as others have shown (I'm mentioned in this book's voluminous acknowledgements but had no direct role in its creation) and as Freedman shows in moving detail. Now, Republicans are squandering their edge, too—at least in the view of another of Freedman's subjects, who also becomes a GOP operative but then drops out of politics entirely.

Freedman's subjects bear a resemblance to Michael Lind's "national liberals" or "radical centrists"—the decent, wage-earning, often white-ethnic workers who feel squeezed by both the top and the bottom and find little voice or representation in any current party or movement. A broader assessment of how this abyss opened in our politics is beyond the scope of Freedman's book, but he has put the abyss front and center. Any serious political discussion must reckon with what he surveys.

Occasionally, Freedman dwells a bit too long on stories that don't bear the freight of the book's message—for example, his tale of one of the grandchildren's roles in an obscure state senator's re-election campaign in Queens. Sometimes, the book's shifting back and forth among the various family sagas makes you want to take a note or two to keep track of who's who.

But all the accounts are beautifully rendered and nicely paced; this is a book worth making time for, especially if you're all too busy practicing, thinking, or writing about Beltway politics—in which case you've been doing without a book like this for far too long. □

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Spinning from the Grave

Even at the end of his life, Nixon was still trying to control the story

BY JON MEACHAM

Nixon Off the Record: His Candid Commentary on People and Politics
Monica Crowley, *Random House, $23*

It was Richard Nixon's final comeback, and, like so many of his others, it went surprisingly well. In the '80s and early '90s, there were the carefully scripted private dinners with younger journalists and politicians (the cuisine was almost invariably Chinese, a none-too-subtle reminder of who went there first); *The New York Times* op-eds on Russia or other weighty international matters; the densely written, and largely unread, foreign-policy books. "The Old Man," as his political protégés called him, would have had us all believe that his resurgence from Watergate to respectability was unplanned, a natural course of events. But Nixon's private world, first in exile in San Clemente in the '70s, then in Manhattan, where he moved in the winter of 1980, and finally in Saddle River, N.J., where he lived until his death in April 1994, was really a staging area for a shrewdly manipulated campaign for redemption.

Monica Crowley, a young woman who served on Nixon's small retirement staff from 1990 to 1994, takes us inside this narrow universe with an accounting of the late president's running political asides, commentary, and anxieties about his status. He war-gamed each phone call, memorized details about his dinner guests, fretted about whether Bush or Clinton would adequately defer to him. It's an intriguing book, if only for the fresh evidence it provides of what people familiar with the Nixon of the White House tapes and the Haldeman diaries would expect from the Old Man. This is, as *The New Yorker* smartly noted, "Nixon Unplugged"—the casual and occasionally intemperate remarks of a man who spent much of the second half of the century revising his own history and nursing old grudges. Consider Eisenhower. "'He was very charming and warm socially,' Nixon allowed one day in 1991, 'but he was a hard-ass ... He was a tough son-of-a-bitch. As you know, he didn't endorse me in 1960 until he absolutely had to. That was pretty devastating to my campaign...'"

Nixon unvarnished is not a pretty sight, so it's not surprising that the late president's daughters are said to be upset with the book, and with Crowley. Crowley came into Nixon's orbit when she was an undergraduate at Colgate and wrote him a long letter about his *1999: Victory Without War*. Nixon answered, and invited her for a talk; it led to a job as an editorial assistant. Crowley would write contemporaneous memos recounting his comments; these notes form the basis for *Nixon Off the Record*.

It is curious that Crowley, a devoted Nixon acolyte, seems not to realize that her reporting has pulled back the curtain on a man who cherished controlling his own image, and history's view of him. If Nixon wanted his post-Watergate years to be remembered as those in which he had at last put his old jealousies and machinations behind him—and by most accounts he very much wanted to be seen as a donnish elder statesman, not a bitter, muttering old pol—Crowley has significantly undercut her mentor's wishes.

The book is full of familiar Nixon obsessions. "On February 18, 1991," Crowley writes, "[Nixon] handed me *The New York Times* editorial about Presidents' Day, in which he was not mentioned as

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one of the 20th century's great presidents. 'Well, they had fun with that editorial,' he said dryly." Then there were the Kennedys. "'They simply were not nice. The legend is that Jack was always gracious, charming, dashing,' he said, putting his nose in the air. 'Bull. He spit on waiters and ignored or screamed at the help.'" And there was LBJ, who Nixon allegedly claimed was fixated on bugging. "'Johnson was tough, tough, tough,'" Nixon told Crowley. "'You know, not many realize that he used the kind of tactics that they always criticize me for using.... Johnson had Agnew's plane bugged. Hoover told me later that [Johnson] had *my* plane bugged. Would you believe it?'"

There are touchingly pathetic moments. Once, during the 1992 campaign, Nixon, traveling in California, called in to his office. "'Today I drove up to Santa Monica, where I campaigned in 1950. Everywhere I went, people said that I should be running for president and no one is as smart and politically savvy as I am—and whatnot. It was something!' He brimmed with satisfaction." And there are anecdotes that, while innocuous scenes of retired life, depict Nixon just the way he would have hated: as a phony. One day, Crowley recounts, she came upon an unsuspecting Nixon in his study. "The man who never admitted to watching television was watching 'The Dick Van Dyke Show,' shoeless feet propped up and remote control in hand. Unseen, I watched him smile at the classic comedy." She made her presence known, and "Nixon was mortified. Fumbling to simultaneously turn the television off and put his shoes on, he dropped the remote control and struggled to get his feet into his shoes ... 'Well, you caught me,' he said."

Reading along, you begin to wonder about the nature of Crowley's relationship with Nixon. She tends to imply that she was a kind of heir to the line of Nixon hands exemplified by Haldeman and Haig, loyal courtiers who would listen to hours of presidential ramblings while "Victory at Sea" played in the background. As in countless Washington memoirs, there are passages where she favorably quotes herself saying something insightful, and makes sure to report the late president's appreciation of her remark. One example: Nixon is preparing for a meeting with Clinton on foreign policy and asks Crowley if there's anything she thinks he should mention to the president. "'You may want to tell him that one of the most surprising things we found on the trip [overseas] was that the Eastern European leaders were less fearful of the Russian democracy collapsing and of having an authoritarian regime installed than they were of an American withdrawal from Europe leaving them vulnerable to a resurgent Germany,' I said. 'Ah, that's right,' Nixon replied. 'That is something he should hear.'"

But some Nixon intimates from the last years have questions about Crowley, who was a fairly low-level staffer. Although she worked on foreign-policy books and articles for Nixon, his chief advisor on those matters late in life was Dimitri Simes, who oddly merits only a single mention in Crowley's account. In the end, it's most likely that Crowley benefitted from Nixon's increasing loneliness as he aged. His two top aides had gone West to run his library; Mrs. Nixon died in 1993. His was a shrinking circle, and in the young Crowley he probably found a comfortably attentive ear.

And an unquestioning one. One of the often unacknowledged things about Nixon's campaign to be a Wise Man is how banal a lot of what he said really was. With Crowley, playing the grandfatherly guide to history, he could be painfully obvious: "'Decisions, Monica, decisions. Every great leader needs to be able to make the hard decisions and come down on one side or the other.'" Nixon's political handicapping in the '80s, the source of much of his renewed editorial respect, was usually wrong. As historian Michael Beschloss has pointed out, Nixon predicted, for instance, that the 1984 ticket would be Mondale and Hart, and that it would run Reagan and Bush "a close race."

Crowley is most interesting on the dynamic between Clinton and Nixon. Nixon disliked candidate Clinton, but was easily seduced by the young president, who reached out to him for advice. Yet even that relationship soured after Mrs. Nixon died and neither of the Clintons bothered to attend the funeral. "'Hillary should have been there,' Nixon grumbled. 'That was inexcusable. He comes to me for advice to save his ass and he can't even send a Cabinet member to Mrs. Nixon's funeral....'" An understandable grievance, expressed the way any of us, similarly upset by a slight, might. The Nixon that emerges from these pages is an empathetic figure, prone to the tantrums, ill-considered opinions, and small conceits we indulge in at one time or another. That's not the way Nixon wanted to be remembered, of course, but as always, even in winter, he turned out to be one of us. □

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He's No Moses

Rep. Gary Franks needs to know where he's going before African Americans will follow him into the Republican desert

BY STEVEN A. HOLMES

Searching for the Promised Land: An African-American's Optimistic Odyssey
Gary Franks, *Regnery Publishing Inc., $24*

When you get a telephone call, as I did last August, from Congressman Gary Franks wanting to talk about affirmative action, you pay attention. As one of two black Republicans in the House, Franks is a voice to be listened to on this issue. It did not take me long to figure out that on this occasion, the importance of what Franks had to say went beyond his race and his party.

Franks was angry. Even his high-pitched, almost sweet voice could not disguise his rage. But what was unusual was not his ire, but its target: Newt Gingrich, the leader of Franks's party in the House. "I have been lied to by Newt Gingrich," the Connecticut congressman said, adding that he felt the Speaker did not have "the stomach" for dealing with the issue of affirmative action. Franks was mad that the House Rules Committee, under the control of the GOP leadership, had ruled that Franks could attach an amendment ending minority set-asides only to the Defense Department appropriations bill, thus limiting the amendment's scope to set-aside programs run by the Pentagon. Franks had wanted—and had been promised by Gingrich that he would be able—to tack his amendment onto all appropriations bills, in essence scuttling set-asides throughout the federal government.

I was so stunned that a junior House Republican would so publicly denounce his party's leadership that I first thought some Democratic trickster was trying to put one over on me. I made up some excuse to get Franks off the line, and redialed his office to make sure the person I was talking to was the one he claimed to be. The same voice returned to the line with the same diatribe. "You're not going to see Gary Franks walk out on any tree branch with Newt Gingrich behind him," he said.

Despite the story I wrote in *The New York Times* based on Franks's remarkable comments, the House leadership held firm. Franks later calmed down and held a press conference where he apologized to Gingrich for his intemperate language.

Remembering the incident, I was surprised at Franks's account of it in his autobiography, *Searching for the Promised Land.* Gone are his feelings of betrayal by the House leadership. The book contains no reference to the role played by the GOP leadership in scuttling Franks's plans. Instead, he blames the failure of his amendment to reach the floor on the House Democrats! "It was the Democratic leadership that vowed to stand in the way of the Franks Amendment," he writes. "'Gary, you have every right to ask for a vote,' Minority Leader Dick Gephardt told me. 'But I guarantee that we'll load it with so many amendments that Congress will be immobilized for weeks.'" Franks's version of the fate of his amendment conveniently neglects to mention that, under the rules of the House, the Republican leadership has the power to prevent any Democratic amendments from being considered.

Franks's revisionist account indicates the tenor of this thoroughly disappointing book. It is replete with inaccuracies, provides little introspection, and serves up little more than vacuous political boilerplate. Franks claims credit, for example, for helping to broker a compromise between Congress and the Bush administration that led to the passage of the 1991 Civil Rights Act; he describes himself as

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shuttling between the White House and the Hill to work out the details. Congressional staffers who were intimately involved in the legislation say Franks played no role in the negotiations that led to its enactment. The final deal was hammered out on the Senate side; House members meekly went along.

Franks's book is a shame, really. As the first black Republican elected to the House since 1935, Franks could tell us a lot. Since his election in 1990, the larger question surrounding Franks is whether he is an aberration or a harbinger. His story, that of an African American who spent a large part of his childhood in overwhelmingly white schools and neighborhoods and who felt accepted by his white friends and classmates, is one that is increasingly common as more blacks join the middle class. The saga of his disenchantment with the Democratic Party, a party to which blacks have given virtually unquestioned loyalty since the mid-1960s, could have been a road map either for the Republicans to make inroads into the black community or for the Democrats to figure out how to hold onto African Americans.

Rather than plunging into the deep pool of ideas and cultural crosscurrents that could be gleaned from Franks's life, a reader who finishes this book will likely feel as if he has crossed an intellectual stream without getting his cuffs damp. Indeed, Franks never gives a well-reasoned answer to the major question of his life and career: Why is he a Republican? Given the fact that he has had no legislative accomplishments since being elected to Congress, Franks's claim to notoriety rests solely on the odd mixture of his race and political affiliation. But beyond serving up a few banal slogans, Franks never gives any real insight as to how this came to be. "Maybe it was those high interest rates, high unemployment and high inflation brought on by the Carter years that pushed me over the brink," he writes of his decision to become a Republican. "But all the blame or the credit should not go to former President Jimmy Carter. The failures of the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson truly deserve acknowledgment as well. The tax-and-spend big government approach of the Democratic Party is simply not appealing to me."

Franks never gives us a clue to the life experiences or intellectual odyssey that led him to these conclusions. What was the epiphany? He has two sisters who are teachers, another who is a guidance counselor at the University of Virginia, and a brother who is a social worker for the state of Connecticut. Yet Franks never tells us how he reconciles his antipathy to "tax and spend" government with his siblings' public sector careers. And beyond decrying welfare, he never spells out just what "failures" of the Great Society he is talking about.

All Franks gives us is that, as a real estate agent in Waterbury in 1983, he walked into the office of Martin and Rowland Insurance to renew his policy, and Republican John Rowland, who would later be elected governor, struck up a conversation.

"'Gary, is it true you're thinking about getting involved in politics?' John asked. "'I guess I've given it some thought,' I said, trying to sound noncommittal. The Waterbury Republicans had just suffered another dismal defeat.... I knew they were looking for new blood." That is virtually the sum total of Franks's explanation as to how he became a Republican. I guess all black Republicans can't be Saul on the road to Damascus.

The book does have a few moments. Franks, who has frequent run-ins with the overwhelmingly Democratic Black Caucus, paints the group as being full of small-minded pols who would rather socially ostracize someone with different ideas than engage him in debate. And Franks's account of how he won his first Republican nomination for Congress at the state party's convention in 1990 is a hoot. It reads like a scene out of *Putney Swope*, Robert Downey's 1968 classic in which a black is elected chairman of the board of an advertising agency by fellow board members who individually cannot vote for themselves and figure nobody else would vote for a black. In Franks's case, his rivals urged some of their supporters to vote for him in order to ensure one of the other white candidates would end up in last place and not make it to the next round of balloting. Franks kept surviving until only he and a callow 23-year-old political novice were left. The stunned convention then opted for age over color.

"'God did this for us,' my sister Ruthie shouted over the mayhem," Franks writes, completely missing the roles played by racism and inept Machiavellian politics.

But such moments are too few and too devoid of any irony to make this book worthwhile. Perhaps one day Gary Franks will become a serious player on the national scene and write a serious book. So far he has done neither. □

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Political Booknotes

Up From Conservatism: Why the Right Is Wrong for America
Michael Lind
The Free Press, $27.50
By Todd Gitlin

Michael Lind is the *enfant terrible* of that *famille terrible*, the American right. Accordingly, he has been much denounced by its standard-bearers for having the bad taste to point out that the archdeacons of morality are, in fact, nudists. His new polemic will bring conniptions to his former colleagues at *National Review*, the Heritage Foundation, and *The National Interest*, often for good reasons, but it's not totally successful despite its worthy purpose.

Lind offers a political analysis of the ascent of conservatism and a critique of some of its most stirring ideas, basted together with enough personal testimony to warrant that he was right to exit. The more substantial portions of *Up From Conservatism* are argumentative. Lind's first task is to demonstrate that so-called conservatism is riding high politically by default, because there is a missing position in American politics. If we map economic and social views from liberal to conservative along two axes, there should be four possible positions. Combine social and economic liberalism and you get left-liberalism, which is mired in identity politics and offers next to nothing for the white working class. Combine social liberalism and economic conservatism and you get the neoliberalism of Bill Clinton. Combine economic and social conservatism and you get the conservatism that reigns in the Republican Party. Combine economic liberalism and social conservatism and you get—next to nothing: no vigorous movement or institution, no force in the existing parties. Lind calls this missing position "national liberalism," identifying it with the New Deal, Hubert Humphrey, and Scoop Jackson, and basing it on the (largely white) working class. Absent a progressive nationalist alternative, he says, conservatives have cornered the political debate.

But how lower-case liberalism collapsed in the United States is a more tangled story than Lind adequately explains. The fault, as he finds it, is in the "overclass," his popularization of Gunnar Myrdal's catchy coinage referring to the managerial and professional types who control both major parties and all other institutions of substance. The grip of the overclass—and not globalization or technological change—explains why the obscene inequality prevailing in America is uncontested. However socially liberal, the overclass doesn't wish to tax itself. "Left-liberalism, neoliberalism, and conservatism are all compatible, in one way or another, with either the social views or the economic interests of the overclass," Lind writes. "But national liberalism, with its mixture of social conservatism and economic liberalism, represents a direct threat to overclass social views (which tend to be liberal) and overclass economic interests (which are promoted by neoliberal and conservative policies)."

There's something to this, but how much? The overclass is looser and baggier than he suggests, and not quite as monstrous. Who knows how many in its ranks could be mobilized toward principled liberalism if political leaders set out to do so? There's a bit of the populist simple-mindedness here that Lind elsewhere deplores for having wrecked national liberalism.

In the second part of his book, Lind makes a compelling case that much of what passes for conservative thought is worthless. The right owes its policy-influencing clout not so much to impressive research or crystalline reasoning as to the deep pockets of its sponsors—*The Wall Street Journal* and the foundation/think tank complex of the John M. Olin Foundation, the Manhattan Institute, and the American Enterprise Institute, all of which have invested mightily in the careers of such sloppy writers as Charles Murray and Dinesh D'Souza, with many happy returns. For some 15 years of what passes for political discourse in America, they have bought their way to the top of the agenda.

Lind indicts the intellectual right for trafficking in fraud, whether supply-side economics and the Laffer Curve in the 1980s, or school vouchers in the 1990s. His critique is trenchant and largely deserved. Such gatekeepers of the right as Irving Kristol and Robert Bartley blithely promote their flat-earth ideas with breathtaking intellectual dishonesty, and no amount of *tu quoque* can smear it away. For example, in *Losing Ground*, Charles Murray declared that welfare corrupts the (disproportionately black) poor, only to follow this best-selling success with a book arguing that the fault lay in their nature, not their nurture at all. But who, besides Joe Conason in *The New York Observer*, paused to notice the incompatibility?

Lind also notes the contribution of his recent employer, *The New Republic*, to sloppy thinking with its publication of Elizabeth McCaughey's trash-job on the Clinton health plan. The same periodical flashed the go-signal that *The Bell Curve* was worthy of serious consideration by treating it to a cover story. The heirs of Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann were proposing that we debate the genes of blacks rather than the causes of deindustrialization.

Crackpot thinking with an apocalyptic edge—"populist," in Lind's term—looms large on the right. "We should not be surprised that the grandchildren of free-silverites should become enamored of supply-side economics in the 1980s and the flat tax in the 1990s, nor that they should be easily persuaded that American life would be much better if

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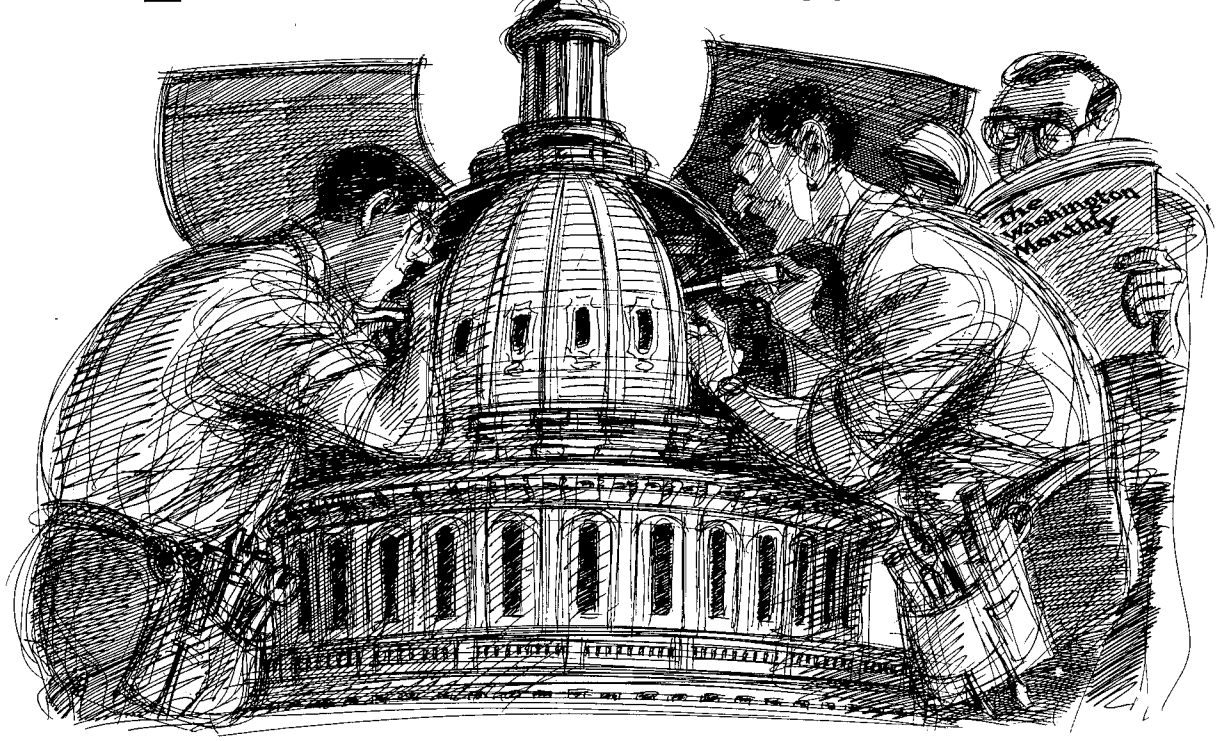

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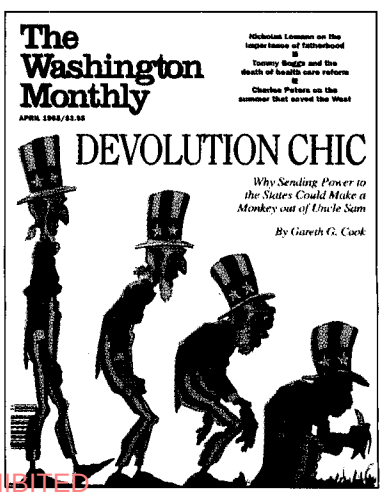

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only public education and federal welfare were utterly annihilated," he writes. In the realm of decline and fall, there is no more lurid tub-thumper than the Reverend Pat Robertson, who, in *The New World Order,* as Lind revealed, had cribbed from anti-Semitic wackos the argument that a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy has been rigging the course of American history for two centuries. If this wasn't bad enough, what did conservative respectables do when Lind told us what was in Robertson's pages? They clucked, they hemmed and hawed, and "moved on" to put the "problem" proverbially behind them. If left-wing extremists enjoyed exposure comparable to Robertson's at any museum, university, or newspaper you could name, right-wing intellectuals would be denouncing them as "thought police" and their fellow travelers as hypocrites and cowards.

Lind recounts that he broke with his long-time patron William F. Buckley Jr., and the rest of the conservative movement, after watching him partner up with Robertson on a "Firing Line" debate. The neoconservatives caved in to the far right, and they did it, Lind says, for votes. They have gone where their reliable cadres are—the South and the Christian Coalition—though conservatives may be risking their 1994 conquest in the process.

The curious thing about Lind's book, however, is how little credence it gives to conservative impulses in the American populace itself. At one point, he treats the culture war as a stratagem, by Lee Atwater via Richard Nixon; at another, he treats it as a consequence of the Southern ascendancy in American politics. In Lind's view, in other words, conservatism, or something that calls itself by that name, has prevailed from on high and down South.

He is dead right to call attention to "the southernization of the nation" and of the Republican Party in particular, with Newt Gingrich of Georgia and Trent Lott of Mississippi leading the two houses of Congress, not to mention Bill Clinton of Arkansas as president and Al Gore of Tennessee as vice president. Otherwise, however, Lind's account of American politics is largely devoid of Americans—especially the Americans he rightly considers abandoned by politics.

Finally, *Up From Conservatism* is partly a memoirist's account of how and when the scales fell from his eyes: how, for example, Lind realized that Buckley was willing to play ball with Robertson after Lind had exposed Robertson's book as a heap of recycled conspiracy theories. But the brief narrative segments are not very thorough and not well-integrated with the major argumentative portions. It seems that Lind thought he owed his readers an account of how he discarded his illusions, but his rendering is cursory. And the melodrama of these accounts verges on propa-

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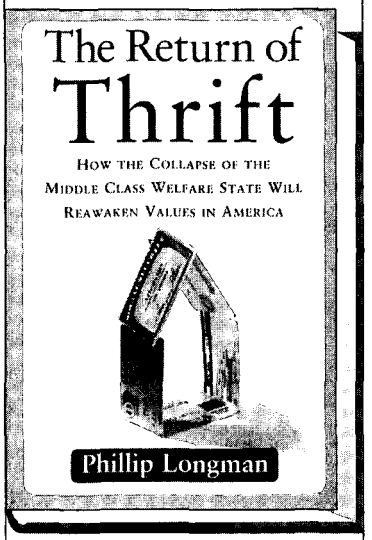

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ganda. The young man on the fast track is given to fast tracts. He repeats himself, and there are too many slogans. He is given to blunt statement, frequently overstatement: "American conservatism is dead"; "Today the right is defined by Robertson, Buchanan, and the militia movement." The book at times turns into a sequence of shouts from a man who knows exactly what he thinks, rather than a reasoned consideration of alternative explanations.

In the end, however, Lind performs a great service with his exposé, and his anger is largely warranted. That the right has achieved such undeserved intellectual respectability is a scandal. Lind is a welcome whistle-blower. And in the process, he helps his readers understand how little genuine conservatism—how little concern for the preservation of a moral way of life—there is in America.

Todd Gitlin is a New York University professor and a columnist for The New York Observer. *His latest book is* The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America Is Wracked by Culture Wars.

Hit & Run: How Jon Peters and Peter Guber Took Sony for a Ride in Hollywood
Nancy Griffin and Kim Masters
Simon & Schuster, $25
By Ken Auletta

The non-book book is not a new phenomenon in publishing, but it has become more commonplace. Bob Woodward, among the best reporters on the planet, exploits the genre in *The Choice*, a rushed account of this year's presidential contest. It ends before either party has an official nominee and before the voters have spoken, but nevertheless clamors in June to tell us the dozen or so vice-presidential names on Bob Dole's mind in May.

A non-book differs from a book in several respects. It feels padded, reading more like a newspaper or magazine story in which a lack of time, adequate space, or brain matter keeps the writer from conveying complexity, perspective, gravitas. It trains its eye too much on today's headlines. And it too often prosecutes rather than explains. These are the chief failures of *Hit & Run: How Jon Peters and Peter Guber Took Sony for a Ride in Hollywood*, Nancy Griffin and Kim Masters's lively account of the breathtakingly dumb decisions Sony has made in Hollywood and the odious cast of characters behind them. As is common in the non-book book genre, the authors succeed in making the reader feel something—in this case, outrage—but fail to advance our understanding of the principal actors, particularly Peter Guber. A real book, a genuine biography, not only presents what someone does but helps us understand why they do it.

Not that *Hit & Run* doesn't have sterling moments. The extravagance of Hollywood, the conflicts of interest, and the nepotism are all amply recounted here. Jon Peters, who along with Guber was recruited to run the studio, emerges as a frighteningly engaging combination of thug, charmer, egomaniac, and naif—half illiterate, half marketing genius. Walter Yetnikoff, the record company impresario who recruited Peters and Guber, is hilarious, if unintentionally so, doing his impersonation of a mad Napoleon.

Anyone wanting to understand why the Japanese have generally fared so poorly in software as opposed to hardware will glimpse in this book how tone-deaf Sony executives were to people. The accounts of how Warner Bros. chairman Steve Ross and investment banker Herbert Allen took Sony America's chairman, Mickey Schulhof, to the cleaners are reason enough to argue that just as businessmen should be quarantined from politics, so physicists like Schulhof should stick to science.

What is missing from *Hit & Run* is Peter Guber. Not that his name is absent; he is mentioned throughout. He is the heavy, the greedy guy who wants only money, fame, and possessions—all of which is, no doubt, at least partly true. The problem is that Guber comes off as one-dimensional. The authors did not talk to him because he would not

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cooperate. And though they spoke with people who worked for or with Guber, the portrait that emerges is unrelievedly scathing. Oh yes, they assert that Guber is brilliant, a compelling salesman, a seer when it comes to technology. But rarely do they offer an example of his "brilliance," or an anecdote that makes him come alive as anything other than a monster. In my own limited experience with Guber, I did not find him brilliant. I found him almost incoherent. Yet he rose to the top of a major studio and was coveted by Warner Bros. and others as a producer, so a full rendering of Guber should leave the reader with an understanding of his talents as well as his enormous flaws. This book does not. It even lapses into sexual innuendo—insinuating that Guber had relationships with assistants, and that his wife may have had a fling or two as well.

By page 150 or so I felt fatigued, almost sorry for Guber. I felt as if the authors were presenting a prosecutorial brief, punishing him for not talking to them and clubbing me, repeatedly, with his dastardly deeds, as if I could not be trusted to get it the 10th time. An author's task is to understand and explain, not exhort.

In many ways, this interesting but ultimately unsatisfying book is a reminder of a weakness common to access journalism. It is a little like plea bargaining with a prosecutor: Those who cooperate do better than those who don't. Peters cooperated, and appears as a fully developed character, as more than the hairdresser and paramour of Barbra Streisand he was when he became a producer. Guber did not cooperate, and comes off as a monster. In real books, history is supposed to speak with the authority of fact; the passage of time has allowed some distance, some perspective. In mere journalism, those who talk get to write the first draft of history. Thus Bob Dole cooperates with Bob Woodward while Clinton does not, and the Republican emerges the more sympathetic character.

These gaps do not mean that the book is not a good read, full of interesting material. It does mean that *Hit & Run* is, well, too hit-and-run.

Ken Auletta is the media columnist for The New Yorker.

The Remedy: Class, Race, and Affirmative Action
Richard D. Kahlenberg
Basic Books, $25
By David M. Mastio

The affirmative action debate is burdened by more than its share of writers who care not a whit about changing minds, only scoring points. Richard Kahlenberg is not one of them. *The Remedy: Class, Race, and Affirmative Action* is an honest and kind critique of racial entitlements—honest because it leaves no doubt about the consequences of the current regime, and kind because it offers an effective alternative.

Kahlenberg judges race-based programs a failure at two of the goals most dear to Americans—getting closer to a color-blind society over time and helping the races live better together. There are other arguments for racial preferences, but these ideals, inspired by the civil rights movement, account for the bulk of their support. Affirmative action's sickly performance in meeting these goals should make even the most adamant partisan reconsider.

The failure to achieve a color-blind society is obvious—even proponents of race-based affirmative action have all but abandoned it as a goal. As for increasing social harmony, even the mention of affirmative action raises whites' ire. "When affirmative action is not mentioned in a poll question," Kahlenberg writes, "26 percent of whites believe African Americans tend to be irresponsible, but when affirmative action is mentioned in passing, the number climbs to 43 percent." Blacks aren't perfectly comfortable with affirmative action, either. Kahlenberg cites a 1992 UCLA study that finds middle-class blacks—the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action—find it less appealing than poor whites do.

The point of Kahlenberg's book, however, is not to tear down affirmative

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action but to reinvigorate it, based on the inclusive idea of class, not the divisive grounds of race. Clearly, division is what current affirmative action programs are based on. Their two principal architects, Martin Luther King and Richard Nixon, believed exactly that.

King convinced much of white America that in order to overcome lifetimes of oppression, blacks needed explicit protection of their civil rights; the movement he started culminated in the affirmative action programs we know today. But when he turned his attention away from antidiscrimination laws and toward a broader struggle for economic development, King saw the problems with giving blacks a leg up in education and the marketplace. "Many white workers," he wrote, "whose economic condition is not too far removed from the economic condition of his black brother, will find it difficult to accept a 'Negro Bill of Rights' which seeks to give special consideration to the Negro and does not take into account their [poor whites'] plight."

King had a prescient understanding of whites' resentful attitude toward affirmative action. The sad irony is that the man who is more responsible than anyone else for what we think of as affirmative action in the government may have been purposely exploiting this resentment. Endorsing a plan for government quotas, Richard Nixon used it to create the ill will King was worried about. "There is a good deal of evidence," Kahlenberg writes, "that Nixon was motivated in part by his desire to divide the Democratic political coalition of labor and civil rights groups."

That's an understatement: Affirmative action has helped cleave a huge chunk of traditionally Democratic voters from their party. Surveys show as many as 40 percent of union members and slightly more than 50 percent of Catholics, once Democratic stalwarts, voted Republican in 1994. Nixon's work deserves a good share of the credit. But if affirmative action can be seen as a pernicious strategy to divide poor whites and blacks, Republicans aren't the only ones to blame. Nixon had his reasons, but why would people like Marian Wright Edelman endorse programs that favor even the wealthiest minority over the poorest white? Edelman argues speciously that "all members of the minority group are relatively disadvantaged." But most Americans don't buy that: With a third of African Americans comfortably in the middle class, race simply doesn't work as a proxy for disadvantage.

This divisiveness and logical discontinuity bring Kahlenberg back to the early idea of class-based affirmative action. Most simply, class-based programs are based on American moral ideas honed in the civil rights movement—that the most needy, disadvantaged people deserve a hand up.

After all, disadvantaged blacks and whites share a great many hurdles to success in our society, both educational and social. A workable definition of equal opportunity would be "a situation in which sons and daughters born into different families have the same chances of success." But that situation does not exist for blacks *or* whites. Kahlenberg convincingly cites study after study showing that economic class of parents is a critical factor in determining the later economic class of their children. In other words, if you're born poor, chances are you'll stay poor.

But once he's made the case for class-based programs, Kahlenberg is less thorough. There are no successful large-scale class-based affirmative action programs, and making such a system work in the real world would pose a considerable challenge.

The key problem is finding a logical and fair way to answer the question: When does a potential beneficiary become fixed in his or her class and eligible for help? Consider a middle class young man who has enjoyed all the advantages—good parents who had time to spend with him as he grew up,

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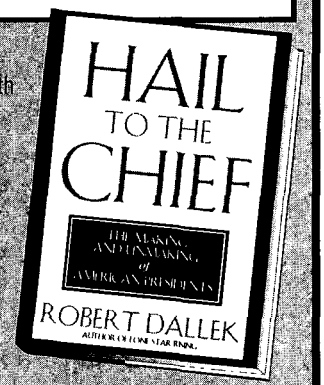

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effective suburban schools without money problems, stimulating vacations, the whole deal. At the end of his junior year in high school, his parents divorce. His mother, who previously stayed at home, wins custody, but with no job experience ends up working for little over the minimum wage.

Is this boy deserving of an advantage? Some federal programs currently say yes. They don't even ask about his father's status, only his mother's income and assets. One of Kahlenberg's justifications for class-based preferences is that early formative years can be so important—the young man got his advantage before disaster struck—but divorce can also have a profound effect on grades and test scores, the keys to getting into a good college.

The opposite question is also important: What about upward mobility? I'm a perfect example. When I was born, my father was a low-paid E-4 in the Army, but while I was in high school, he started his own business and quickly began making significantly more than the national average. Should I get credit for early deprivation? How is that balanced with my later advantages?

Kahlenberg argues that class-based affirmative action should come into play most at the entrance to college and in getting first jobs afterward. How should we deal with the lower-class kid who through affirmative action goes to Harvard versus the middle-class kid who goes to Iowa State when they start looking for their first accounting jobs? Which is now privileged?

Besides these practical questions, Kahlenberg neglects the political reality of complicated programs: In the give-and-take over time, even a well-thought-out, fair program can be twisted into insanity. The largest program coming anywhere close to Kahlenberg's vision is the federal financial aid program for college students, in which grants and subsidized loans (as well as each school's financial aid) are given based on a federal formula for need. Although the federal government spends only about $16 billion, the program's eligibility rules influence private grants totaling more than three times that amount, and the subsidies and guarantees provide many billions more in loans.

But political machinations within both Congress and the bureaucracy have created a tangle of silly and destructive rules. To take just one example: One of the key components of determining class is assets, but now there are plenty of ways to game that measure. Sink all your spare cash into the house and suddenly your kids are poor. (Housing value doesn't count as an asset—perhaps a congressional sop to the housing industry.) If you've still got extra cash lying around, put it in your other children's names and ... voilà, it doesn't count either. Retirement accounts are the same deal. If there's one thing we should have learned over the last 50 years, it's that the bigger the stakes, the more the lobbyists move in. I tremble at the thought of millions of Americans rushing to prove that they and their children are poor.

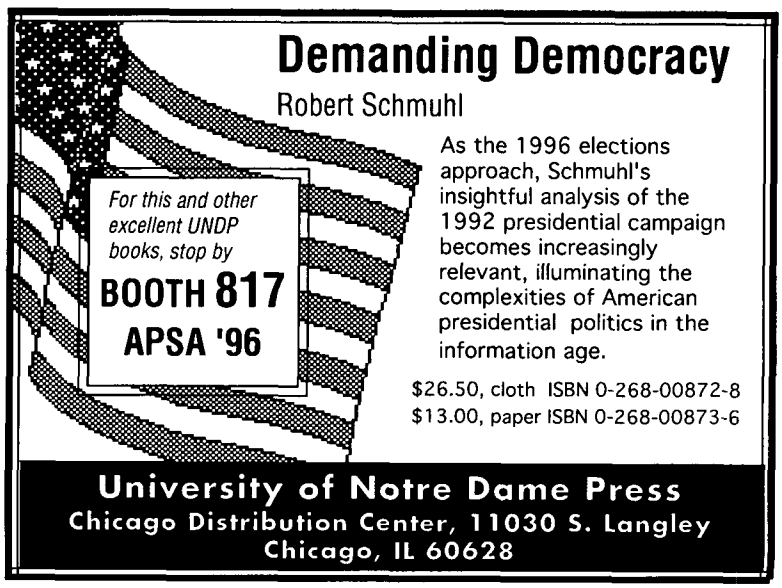
Still, Kahlenberg has written a very good book, which answers a lot of questions and ought to change many minds. President Clinton ought to read it before he next repeats his universally unsatisfying mantra, "Mend it, don't end it." Affirmative action's goal of helping those who started out behind in life is worthy and important. We'll know this country has gotten serious about guaranteeing equal opportunity for its citizens when it gives class-based affirmative action a try, though there are clearly major obstacles to making it work.

David M. Mastio is an editorial board member of USA Today.

Will My Name Be Shouted Out? Reaching Inner City Students Through the Power of Writing
Stephen O'Connor
Simon and Schuster, $23
By Michael K. Mayo

It's hard not to like Stephen O'Connor's *Will My Name Be Shouted Out?* because it's hard not to like Stephen O'Connor. He's an earnest, reflective teacher in New York City middle schools, and his mission, as the subtitle says, is to "reach" inner-city seventh graders "through the power of writing." It's a worthy experiment, one that promises both liberation and art, and it's told by a man who is putting his liberalism where his mouth is. But in the end, both his pedagogy and the book suffer from a problem too common in teaching today: It's too much about O'Connor's and our appreciation of the students' art, and not enough about *school.*

O'Connor's writing class works like this: Write what you want, as long as



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you want, using whatever language leaps to mind. Eventually, we suppose, the confusion of adolescence and inner-city living (as well as that of nouns and direct objects) will resolve itself into some kind of order. Order like this:

I am New York. I am the
chimnees that puffs out smoke
into the air I am the earth
quakes that rips trough the ground
under the houses all around
I am a building being torchered
by a crane banging and banging
until I'm all gone. I am New York
a very unpeaceful place.

The book is full of work like this, and it's usually a pleasure to read. Free writing (as such no-holds-barred lessons are usually called) is an essential part of any English curriculum: You can't convince a 12-year-old of the importance of commas and semicolons without giving him somewhere meaningful to put them.

The question, though, is meaningful to *whom*? In the first few pages, O'Connor provocatively asks whether writing can matter: "...not just charm adults or conform to current literary fashion, but matter *to my students*. If I couldn't help them see the value of writing in their own lives, how could I be sure it had any value at all?"

The answer, it would seem, is that it doesn't. After a year of free writing, his kids are just as bad-mouthed, confused, and headed for disaster as they were on page one. To be sure, their problems are enormous—dead siblings, drug-addicted mothers, murders on their doorsteps—and writing can't change all that. But you expect *some* progress: a greater range in feeling, a more sophisticated thought, a change or two in someone's life. Otherwise, stop—and try a different approach. Instead, O'Connor goes back for another year, with the same program.

For a time, one student's grades go up a bit, but then slip right back. One kid lands a part in a movie, but the rest of them slide toward huge, anonymous high schools, where they often fall apart. They shock him with how nonchalantly they can toss off a gripping monologue about a brother killed in a gang war. But the only person who seems to care about what they've written is O'Connor. "Since it was clear to me that many of my students didn't think they had much cause to celebrate themselves," he writes, "I thought that I had at last discovered what writing could give them that they really needed. The problem was that I don't think a single one of my students ever bought it."

Why not? Part of it, I think, is that such beautiful poetry and storytelling is easy to come by, and his students know it. Plenty of anthologies, TV shows, and movies spotlight the work of inner-city kids, and the culture expects them to perform this way. It's hip for them to be shocking, and for us to be shocked. The problem is that O'Connor, and many liberals like him, get caught up in the aesthetics of the situation without figuring out ways to change it.

That change comes in the mundane form of basic schoolwork. O'Connor's students just don't have the tools to make sense out of their writing, let alone their emotions. The writing hasn't taken them anywhere; it's merely expressed what they already knew. O'Connor's book, if it had followed through with its first question—can writing matter to these kids?—could have been a proper indictment of education in our cities.

Instead, because of this dreamy quest for beautiful art and expression, it winds up being more about O'Connor, and us, than about the students. Far too much of the book falls, sadly, into guilt-ridden, white-voyeur traps: "I was ashamed," he writes after visiting a housing project, "of my anxiety, which seemed irredeemably middle-class, racist even." Who cares?

One reason the poem above is so interesting is that it's so grammatically tortured. It's a nice artistic effect, but it's going to ruin the student. This may be art, but it isn't education. Such appreciation of poetry from children headed for disaster is a sin of omission. While 12-year-olds in New York are writing beautiful poems they don't care about, their peers in Scarsdale are getting the basics under their belts, learning to make sense of their lives even as they learn to express them.

Michael K. Mayo teaches at Nativity Preparatory School in Roxbury, Mass.

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The Good Society: The Humane Agenda
John Kenneth Galbraith
Houghton Mifflin, $24.95
By Paul Krugman

To be both a liberal and a good economist you must have a certain sense of the tragic—that is, you must understand that not all goals can be attained, that life is a matter of painful trade-offs. You must want to help the poor, but understand that welfare can encourage dependency. You must want to protect those who lose their jobs, but admit that generous unemployment benefits can raise the long-term rate of unemployment. You must be willing to tax the affluent to help those in need, but accept that too high a rate of taxation can discourage investment and innovation. To the free-market conservative, these are all arguments for government to do nothing, to accept whatever level of poverty and insecurity the market happens to produce. A serious liberal does not reply to such conservatives by denying that there are any trade-offs at all; he insists, rather, that some trade-offs are worth making, that helping the poor and protecting the unlucky may have costs but will ultimately make for a better society.

The revelation one gets from read-

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ing John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Good Society* is that Galbraith—who is one of the world's most celebrated intellectuals, and whom one would expect to have a deeper appreciation of the complexity of the human condition than a mere technical economist would—lacks this tragic sense. Galbraith's vision of the economy is one without shadows, in which what is good for social justice always turns out to have no unfavorable side effects. If this vision is typical of liberal intellectuals, the ineffectuality of the tribe is not an accident: It stems from a deep-seated unwillingness to face up to uncomfortable reality.

Admittedly, Galbraith did at one time have a distinctive economic theory that might perhaps have justified his disbelief in painful choices. A generation ago, in *The New Industrial State,* he offered an image of an economy that was becoming increasingly dominated by General Motors-type corporations—giant firms, freed by their size and power from the rigors of competition, run by technocrats who pursued bureaucratic imperatives rather than serving the interests of the stockholders. In effect, he argued that capitalism would soon cease to be a market system in any meaningful sense, and that the trade-offs inherent in such a system would therefore soon be irrelevant.

But time has not been kind to that theory. We have not become an economy of GM-sized corporations; in fact, large corporations play a considerably smaller role in the economy now than they did when he wrote his book, and for that matter GM itself is a lot less immune from market pressures than it used to be. Rather than evolving away from a market economy and the constraints it imposes, we are now more firmly ruled by the Invisible Hand than ever before. And indeed one wonders if Galbraith himself is still a Galbraithian; while a few turns of phrase from *The Affluent Society* and *The New Industrial State* resurface in *The Good Society*, for the most part the book is very old-fashioned Keynesianism. Again and again, the book espouses views that had a strong following in the 1950s but have since been abandoned by nearly all researchers in the face of logic, evidence, and experience. Galbraith does not bother to argue that the old conventional wisdom was right and that the new conventional wisdom is wrong; often it seems that he is simply unaware that other people's ideas have changed.

One key example among many: In the chapter on inflation he mentions the "clear choice—the trade-off—between high employment and inflation as against unemployment and relatively stable prices," then adds, "This trade-off is present in all accepted thought." The fact is that it has been a long time since any substantial number of economists believed in a significant long-run trade-off between unemployment and inflation.

This archaism matters, because Galbraith's continuing adherence to the primitive macroeconomics of his youth leaves him unprepared to confront the real dilemmas facing modern liberalism. Consider, for example, what he has to say about the interlinked issues of monetary policy, saving, and budget deficits. Galbraith, remarkably, regards the Federal Reserve as a largely powerless institution; he dismisses the idea that the Fed can end a recession by cutting interest rates as a "[q]uasi-religious conviction" that "triumphs over conflicting experience." Really? Skepticism about the effectiveness of monetary policy was common 40 years ago, but the Fed's role in sparking recoveries in 1971, 1975, 1982, and 1992—together with impressive demonstrations of the power of monetary policy in many other countries—has put such doubts to rest. Because Galbraith believes monetary policy cannot increase demand, however, he has a sort of Depression-era vision of an economy

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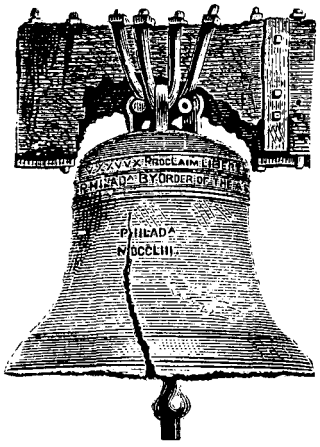

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in which anything that increases spending is good. Should we worry about America's low savings rate or its government deficits? Of course not: These are good things, because they increase demand.

And so Galbraith is oblivious to the most serious problem facing modern liberalism: reconciling social justice with full employment. In the real world this is a terrible dilemma; even Sweden, with its powerful sense of community and overwhelming consensus for the welfare state, has found itself suffering from an acute case of Eurosclerosis. But in Galbraith's world there is no dilemma at all: Unemployment is merely a problem of inadequate demand, to be cured by New Deal-type public works programs and redistribution of income away from rich people who save too much.

There is no issue more painful for the serious liberal than immigration, which inevitably pits the interests of poorly paid workers in advanced countries against those of even worse-paid workers in the Third World. Yet Galbraith waves it all away with the airy remark that "admission must, no doubt, be related to the availability of jobs"—as if the number of jobs for low-skill workers were a fixed number, not something that depends on their wage rate. Suppose the United States were to allow $2-an-hour sweatshops to operate freely on our soil; undoubtedly, we could then gainfully employ tens of millions of immigrants, who would be eager to take those jobs. Our decision not to allow such sweatshops, to deny those potential immigrants that opportunity because we want to protect the wages of those already here, is a harsh choice that involves valuing some people's economic interests over others.

The truth is that constructing and maintaining a good society has turned out to be far more difficult than anyone imagined a generation ago. To be a serious liberal, one must confront that difficulty, make hard choices, and persuade others to do the same. It is therefore a cause for sadness that America's most famous liberal economist has produced a manifesto that simply assumes most of the difficulties away.

Paul Krugman is an economist at MIT. His latest book is Pop Internationalism.

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Pop Internationalism

Paul Krugman

The MIT Press, $22.50

By Dante Ramos

Those of us who live just downwind from massive industrial installations get a little suspicious when we read about "competitiveness." We've heard ad nauseam that the United States is losing ground in the "global economy"—that imports are pricing American goods out of the market and that American capital is fleeing to take advantage of Third World slave wages. But experience provides little support for this story: If all the factories have gone to Mexico, they've somehow left the plasticky aroma of manufacturing behind.

Anyway, argues Paul Krugman in *Pop Internationalism*, academic economics contradicts the conventional wisdom on this subject entirely. Krugman identifies "pop internationalism" as a set of commonly held beliefs about the role of international trade in the future of the U.S. economy. Pop internationalism holds, for example, that countries face off, just as companies do, in a zero-sum struggle for dominance in the world marketplace, whereas most academics believe trade generally benefits all countries that engage in it. Academics want to increase domestic labor productivity, because improved productivity allows the same number of Americans to buy more of the things they want. But pop internationalists would improve it primarily because it helps the country "compete."

The 13 essays that constitute this book don't jell into a thorough, systematic dissection of pop internationalism, but the overall theme is clear. In truth, imports and exports—the only goods affected by international trade—make up only an eighth of American output; a full two thirds consists of nontradable goods and services. Consequently, Krugman argues, the handwringing over whether America will "beat" developing countries on the world market is mostly hype—and dangerous hype at that.

The pop internationalists drawing Krugman's ire are a distinguished lot, including MIT's Lester Thurow, Labor Secretary Robert Reich, and Undersecretary of Commerce Jeffrey Garten. Their book titles tend to sound like Tom Clancy novels (*Head to Head: The Coming Battle Among America, Japan and Europe*). Insofar as the pop internationalists have influence, Krugman declares, their beliefs lead to destructive policies that actually cripple productivity growth.

Consider the question of whether the United States should preserve trade barriers against low-wage countries. Labor

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leaders opposed to NAFTA and GATT predicted a flood of goods out of, and a massive shift of capital into, developing countries. Of course, union leaders are paid to raise such specters. But the same fears have arisen in circles considered more intellectually sophisticated. A publication called *World Competitiveness Report*, produced by the World Economic Forum, sketches as bleak a picture as any AFL-CIO lobbyist ever did. Suggesting that industrialized nations will no longer be able to create wealth, the report declares, "the raison d'être of many countries is at stake."

But Krugman refutes the argument, and others like it, with an axiom of international trade: When a country has a trade deficit—when its imports exceed its exports—that also means that capital is coming into the country. Deficits and capital inflows, in other words, rise together. And countries with a trade surplus invest that surplus abroad.

The pop internationalist scenario requires the impossible: for a cheap-labor country to run a trade surplus but still attract foreign capital. It doesn't work like that. The fears of the labor unions and of the World Economic Forum are irrational. But these fears are easier for nearly everybody to comprehend than an economist's explanation of how American companies can stay in business even if their Third World competitors pay lower salaries. The economist's explanation, which centers around comparative advantages, is credible but complicated.

Krugman thinks he and other academic economists have been crowded out of the public policy debate by pop internationalists who emphasize the role of trade. Most pop internationalists do favor a reduction in trade barriers—sweetened, perhaps, with worker retraining or a mild industrial policy. But Krugman argues that they accept the premise that free trade will harm many Americans, and thus advance the cause of protectionism. An obsession with competitiveness is dangerous because it distracts us from the economy's real problems: a monstrous national debt and a piddly national savings rate. Krugman urges American policy intellectuals to zero in on these problems, which don't necessarily lend themselves to lofty speeches or sexy book titles.

In fact, Krugman thinks pop internationalists are unreliable sources of any economic advice whatsoever. "To make a harsh but not entirely unjustified analogy," Krugman sneers, "a government wedded to the ideology of competitiveness is as unlikely to make good economic policy as a government committed to creationism is to make good science policy."

This is indeed harsh. While *Pop Internationalism* boasts plenty of clever writing and hale argument, it is also a surprisingly caustic book. At some point, stridency of tone can become a substantive flaw, and Krugman nearly reaches that point. Certainly all the writers whom he criticizes subscribe to at least some of the views that he describes as pop internationalism. But Krugman gives short shrift to the differences among them—Reich, for example, is a supporter of free trade, whereas Clyde Prestowitz of the Economic Strategy Institute is a skeptic—lumping them all into a more or less monolithic group. And if their writings were as outrageous as Krugman says, he could easily hang them with their own quotes. Instead, he relies heavily on admittedly fabricated statements that, he says, represent the sort of thing pop internationalists would argue.

The strident tone also makes you question whether he's considered all of his opponents' arguments fairly. In one essay, taken from a 1995 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Krugman declares that the rapid growth of East Asian economies is not a miracle, contrary to popular wisdom. Like the explosion of output in Soviet industry in the 1950s and 1960s, he argues, the Asian countries' economies have expanded almost entirely because of massive capital improvements, not because of increased worker productivity. A letter that was printed in the next issue of *Foreign Affairs*, but not included in this book, cited other studies that found significant productivity growth in East Asia, but these studies don't appear in Krugman's footnotes. Krugman's reply to the letter, also not included in this book, apologized for the essay's "deliberately provocative style" and acknowledged an intention "to shake up what I feared was becoming a closed circle of intellectual complacency." This is not the sort of behavior you expect from someone who belittles other writers' lack of rigor and assumes the role of defender of the faith.

Undoubtedly, Krugman has performed a valuable public service by questioning such banalities as "We have to compete in the global economy." And you have to admire the chutzpah of a vigilante economist who includes an unpublished essay with the explanation that it was "written in the false belief that the editor of *The New York Review of Books* had some respect for my intellectual tradition." But *Pop Internationalism* does leave a sour taste; perhaps economists should write with the cool, dry wit of John Maynard Keynes, rather than with the bitter ranting of Alanis Morissette.

Dante Ramos is a reporter at the New Orleans Times-Picayune.

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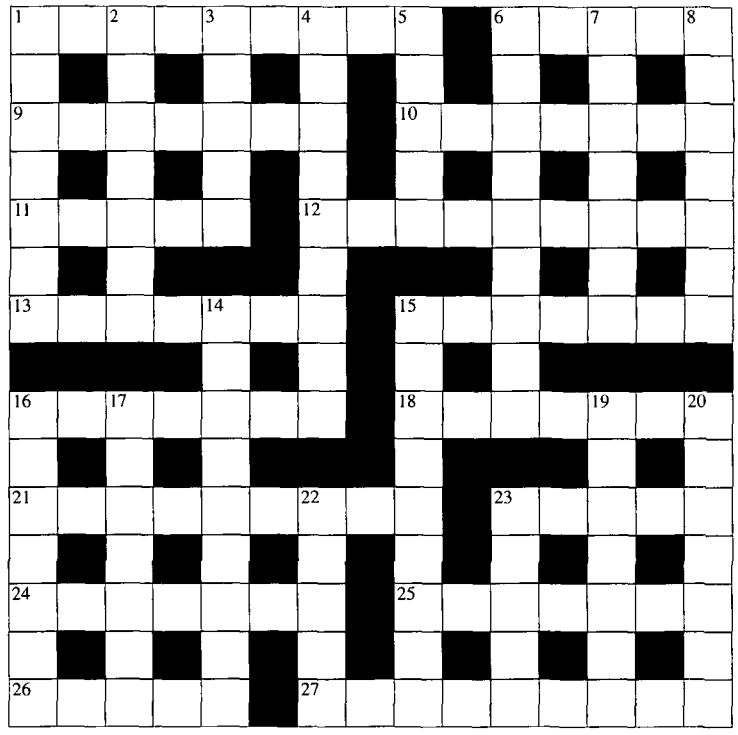
Political Puzzle

BY JOHN BARCLAY

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words—thus (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, such as USA, are treated as one word.



Across

1. Kind of camera consumed Dole, for example. (9)
6. Overt play for good citizen. (5)
9. Tapes an erratic farmer. (7)
10. The elderly sometimes toss dart in type of program. (7)
11. Sluggish rite performed around end of season. (5)
12. One of the media featuring strange dash? (9)
13. Fiddling toes in a new country. (7)
15. Catches prostitutes. (7)
16. Gap if cited incorrectly. (7)
18. One lacking faith in field arrangement. (7)
21. Unsound American particles make deceptive displays. (9)
23. Senator familiarly taking back clever remarks about end of war. (5)
24. Diet fan turning difficult... (7)
25. ...to exceed his limit and revote a new way. (7)
26. Faction function? (5)
27. Twisting arm notion for convention figure. (9)

Down

1. Top grain whim? (7)
2. Eastern detour is least distant. (7)
3. Wrong paint mixture. (5)
4. Escort making communications giant finish insect. (9)
5. Give final pressure shakedown. (5)
6. Certain legislation of poor vet amended. (5,4)
7. Destructive pest? Meter it carefully. (7)
8. Moves to new location and, strangely, is terse. (7)
14. Say screen adaptation is critical. (9)
15. Short mail disruption produced widespread adverse reaction. (9)
16. Did pure exercise and ceased to provide information. (5,2)
17. Be deceived and turn all off before last of power. (4,3)
19. Least bright art desk arrangement. (7)
20. Set up tile rim boundary. (7)
22. Frequent decimal? (5)
23. Back firm. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:

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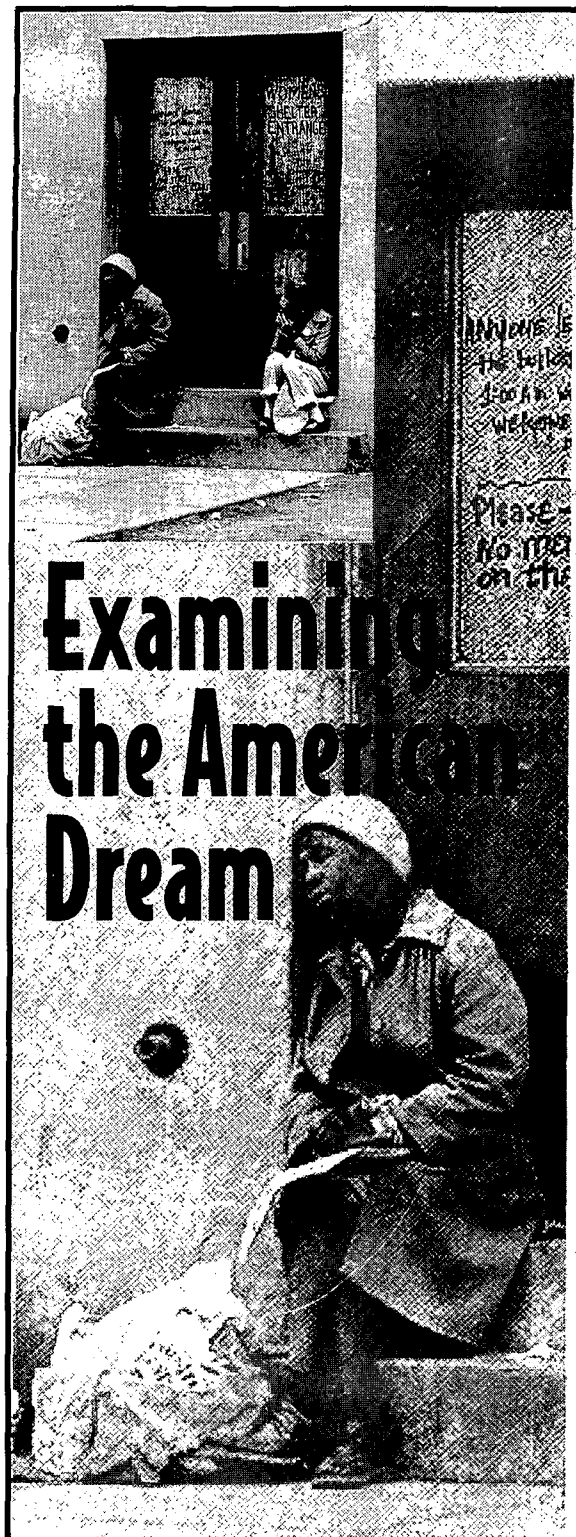

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